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General Assembly

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Official Records

23rd plenary meeting
Thursday, 9 October 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 154

Judges of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/63/458)

Letter from the President of the Security Council addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/63/470)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before taking up agenda item 154, I would like to consult members with regard to proceeding to the consideration of this agenda item. In this connection, I would like to draw attention to the relevant provision of rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which reads as follows:

> "No additional item may, unless the General Assembly decides otherwise by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, be considered until seven days have elapsed since it was placed on the agenda and until a committee has reported upon the question concerned."

In the absence of an objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed to the consideration of agenda item 154.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite the attention of the Assembly to documents A/63/458 and A/63/470. In document A/63/458, the Secretary-General transmitted two letters, dated 5 June 2008 and 1 September 2008, from Judge Fausto Pocar, President of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. In his letter, the Secretary-General informs the Assembly that the President seeks the extension of the terms of office of the permanent and ad litem judges elected to serve with the Tribunal in 2005 and whose terms of office expire on 16 November 2009 and 23 August 2009, respectively. The Secretary-General also states that the President has requested an extension of the terms of the remaining ad litem judges who are not currently appointed to serve at the Tribunal.

The Secretary-General further informs the Assembly that the President has provided details on the necessity and urgency of this request, which is primarily to ensure that the judges may complete the cases to which they are assigned. As the statute of the International Tribunal does not provide for the extension of the terms of office of the judges, the approval of the Security Council, as the parent organ of the International Tribunal, and of the General Assembly, as the organ that elects its judges, would be needed.

In document A/63/470, the President of the Security Council transmits to the President of the General Assembly the text of Council resolution 1837

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

08-54359 (E)

(2008) of 29 September 2008, whereby the Council, inter alia:

"1. Decides to extend the terms of office of the following permanent judges at the Tribunal who are members of the Appeals Chamber until 31 December 2010, or until the completion of the cases before the Appeals Chamber if sooner:

–Liu Daqun (China)

–Theodor Meron (United States of America)

–Fausto Pocar (Italy)

–Mohamed Shahabuddeen (Guyana)

"2. Decides to extend the terms of office of the following permanent judges at the Tribunal who are members of the Trial Chambers until 31 December 2009, or until the completion of the cases to which they are assigned if sooner:

–Carmel Agius (Malta)

–Jean-Claude Antonetti (France)

–Iain Bonomy (United Kingdom)

–Christoph Flügge (Germany)

–O-Gon Kwon (South Korea)

–Bakone Justice Moloto (South Africa)

–Alphons Orie (The Netherlands)

–Kevin Parker (Australia)

–Patrick Robinson (Jamaica)

–Christine Van den Wyngaert (Belgium)

"3. Decides to extend the terms of office of the following ad litem judges, currently serving at the Tribunal, until 31 December 2009, or until the completion of the cases to which they are assigned if sooner:

Ali Nawaz Chowhan (Pakistan)

Pedro David (Argentina)

Elizabeth Gwaunza (Zimbabwe)

Frederik Harhoff (Denmark)

Tsvetana Kamenova (Bulgaria)

Uldis Kinis (Latvia)

Flavia Lattanzi (Italy)

Antoine Kesia-Mbe Mindua (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

Janet Nosworthy (Jamaica)

Michèle Picard (France)

Árpád Prandler (Hungary)

Kimberly Prost (Canada)

Ole Bjørn Støle (Norway)

Stefan Trechsel (Switzerland)

"4. Decides to extend the term of office of the following ad litem judges, who are not currently appointed to serve at the Tribunal, until 31 December 2009, or until the completion of any cases to which they may be assigned if sooner:

Melville Baird (Trinidad and Tobago)

Frans Bauduin (The Netherlands)

Burton Hall (The Bahamas)

Frank Höpfel (Austria)

Raimo Lahti (Finland)

Jawdat Naboty (Syrian Arab Republic)

Chioma Egondu Nwosu-Iheme (Nigeria)

Prisca Matimba Nyambe (Zambia)

Brynmor Pollard (Guyana)

Vonimbolana Rasoazanany (Madagascar)

Krister Thelin (Sweden)

Klaus Tolksdorf (Germany)

Tan Sri Dato Lamin Haji Mohd Yunus (Malaysia)."

If there is no objection, I propose that the Assembly decide to endorse this recommendation of the Secretary-General, which was endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1837 (2008) of 29 September 2008.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 154.

Agenda items 10 and 101

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/63/92)

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218 and Corr.1)

The President: I am very pleased that we have this opportunity to discuss the Secretary-General's reports on the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. The Commission and its Fund are two new initiatives born of our determination that the United Nations be equipped to assist countries emerging from conflict to secure long-term peace in the twenty-first century. They represent new additions to the peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations and we must keep in mind that they are still constructions in progress and need our full attention and support.

Given the record of peace accords that have failed in their first years, those reform initiatives fill a long-standing gap in our peacemaking architecture. They are examples of the United Nations doing things differently and learning from past lessons of success and failure. They arise from efforts to find new ways to promote partnerships and solidarity in post-conflict situations that have been misunderstood and neglected in the past.

The Commission, the Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office are demonstrating the importance of broad-based partnerships that count on the dynamic support of the entire United Nations membership, including the main troop-contributing countries to United Nations peacekeeping missions and the major donor countries. With that support, those new entities bring together the Organization's political, security, development and human rights components in an integrated approach to addressing the tremendous challenges in post-conflict situations.

The success of the Peacebuilding Fund in meeting its original target of $250 million and the broad base of its contributors are also testimony to the confidence vested in the United Nations. It reflects the commitment of the international community to closing a critical funding gap in the transition from violence to sustainable peace and development.

Two years after their creation, the Commission and the Fund continue to explore new ways to address the challenges that many post-conflict situations represent to the world. The reports before us today reflect the encouraging progress made by the Commission, the Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office in addressing critical post-conflict priorities. Their initial work focused on the post-conflict situations in Burundi, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone. Today, they are also assisting the Central African Republic. The Fund has also supported peacebuilding initiatives in Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Guinea, Liberia, Kenya and Nepal.

The reports provide a candid analysis of the challenges that lie ahead for the Commission and the Fund. I have voiced my concern about the need to sustain those and other efforts to fulfil the Charter's mandates of peace and security, as well as economic and social development, in these times of global financial crisis. We must ensure that the collective action and commitment of Member States, concerned countries, the United Nations system and all relevant international and regional actors are sustained in the months and years ahead.

The relevance and credibility of the new United Nations peacebuilding architecture will ultimately be measured by its ability to mobilize international support that delivers tangible peace dividends to the people of Burundi, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone. Those dividends are needed now — not two, three or five years from now.

It must also enhance national capacities to sustain peace and rebuild the foundations for longer-term socio-economic development. To succeed, its work must respect the principle of national ownership of all peacebuilding efforts and must involve regional and subregional actors to widen the impact of peace and stability.

To that end, I call on the international community to continue to strengthen the capacities of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. New and predictable financial and human resources must be channelled to address the critical priorities determined by the countries concerned.

The General Assembly will have other opportunities during this session to engage in critical discussions on post-conflict peacebuilding. As a parent organ of this architecture, we welcome that responsibility. The Assembly will consider the Secretary-General's proposed review of the terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund. We will also review the Secretary-General's recommendations

aimed at improving the United Nations response in early recovery and post-conflict situations.

I also call on all members to demonstrate a spirit of partnership and responsibility so that we can move ahead with electing new members of the Commission in all pending categories of membership. I intend to invest the time and effort needed to attain that objective before the end of the year.

These represent opportunities for the General Assembly, with its universal membership and moral authority, to utilize the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the services of the Peacebuilding Fund to promote a more democratic, coherent and agile United Nations. Our credibility and leadership will be measured by our ability to respond to the needs of societies aspiring to peace, stability and prosperity.

I see today's debate as an opportunity for Member States to reflect on the question of how the General Assembly can best support and reinforce the lofty goals of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. We must aim for nothing less than significant change in policies and attitudes on the part of all relevant stakeholders in addressing the plight of societies emerging from conflict.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, who is also the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): Thank you, Mr. President, for a very important and encouraging introductory statement, which will guide our work and this debate.

Today, I am very pleased to present the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its second year of activity (A/63/92). The report covers the wide range of activities undertaken by the Commission during its previous session. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of its members, the Commission made steady progress and produced concrete results in many areas of its work. As the President stated, the four country-specific configurations engaged in intensive work to produce tangible progress on the ground.

With regard to Burundi, the Monitoring and Tracking Mechanism of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding was adopted in December 2007, and the focus was changed to implementation. This June, the first biannual review was conducted, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Løvald of Norway; it called for further efforts in areas such as good governance, compliance with the Ceasefire Agreement, the security sector, the rule of law, the land issue and socio-economic recovery. The mobilization of international assistance was also emphasized, as well as the subregional dimension and the gender issue. Ambassador Lidén of Sweden has now taken over as Chair.

Concerning Sierra Leone, the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework was adopted in December 2007. Under the chairmanship of Ambassador Majoor of the Netherlands, the biannual review in June recommended youth employment and empowerment, energy, the global food crisis and rising oil prices as areas that would require special attention.

Guinea-Bissau was referred by the Security Council in December 2007, and the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Viotti of Brazil, adopted the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding on 1 October. The elections to be held in mid-November; economic and infrastructure rehabilitation, including the energy sector; security sector reform; the rule of law and the fight against drug trafficking; public administration reform; and social questions: these have been identified as priority areas.

The Central African Republic was referred in June 2008. Work has just begun, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Grauls of Belgium, to formulate an integrated strategy by making full use of the lessons learned from the experiences of other configurations.

With strong leadership by the Chairs of the country-specific configurations, the Peacebuilding Commission continued to focus sustained attention on support for national efforts. Interaction within the Commission and with others strengthened the notions of the primary responsibility of national Governments, national priorities, the partnership of the international community and mutual accountability, while encouraging interaction among national stakeholders and international partners. That cooperative approach of the Peacebuilding Commission is its greatest asset and has added value to ongoing national and international efforts.

In that connection, I would like to express my appreciation for the prompt approval by the General

Assembly of the necessary funding for the field missions of country-specific configurations and the visits of the Chairs, which were particularly valuable in the Commission's engagement with the countries under its consideration.

Secondly, there are many other countries in the world besides those four that are in the post-conflict peacebuilding process and face various types of challenges. The Peacebuilding Commission may provide useful support for efforts to address those challenges by developing a strategy and policies for effective peacebuilding efforts. With that purpose in mind, the Organizational Committee conducted in-depth strategic and policy discussions — for example, on the role of the private sector and the synergy between peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

In the same vein, the Working Group on Lessons Learned, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador, took up topics such as peacebuilding frameworks, local governance and decentralization, the gender issue, transitional justice and internal displacement. The synthesis report issued after the last meeting could serve as a good basis for future work to develop best practices.

Thirdly, serious efforts were made to enhance partnerships at the highest level, in particular with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the African Union and the European Union. United Nations bodies in New York, Geneva and Vienna were all mobilized. Regular contacts with the Presidents of principal organs of the United Nations — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — were also established. Many outreach efforts were made by the Chairpersons and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) to deepen understanding of the specific needs of post-conflict countries and the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. In that connection, I would like to acknowledge the particular value of the seminars and workshops organized recently in many places in the world, including Geneva, Tokyo, Brussels and Alpbach, Austria. We are grateful to the PBSO for providing valuable support in assisting the work of the Commission in all those areas.

What of the way forward? We have made steady progress, as you kindly acknowledged, Mr. President. We must continue our efforts to produce more concrete results. I would like to outline four priority areas that need to be focused upon.

First, we must continue to produce more tangible results on the ground. We should bring about visible impacts of direct benefit to the people of the countries under consideration. In order to consolidate peace, it is essential that people can actually see and experience the signs of the arrival of peace after a ceasefire, through such positive changes in their lives as electricity supply and the opening of schools and clinics. We need to elicit the support of all stakeholders and to mobilize resources, not only from traditional partners but also by bringing in new and non-traditional partners. I appeal to all Member States to extend their support to national efforts in the priority areas identified in the integrated strategies. Support for the successful conduct of elections in Guinea-Bissau in mid-November or in Burundi in 2010 are good examples to start with.

Secondly, it is important to deepen strategic and policy discussions. The strategy for international efforts at peacebuilding is still in the early stages of development. We must make our best effort to develop policies on how to fill the gap between peacekeeping and peacebuilding and also the gap between peacebuilding and development. There is a need to promote conceptual and policy guidance for effective peacebuilding efforts through discussions in the Commission. Topics such as youth employment, the role of the private sector, justice and peace and the subregional dimension may be considered. The Commission will also cooperate closely with the Secretariat in the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on early recovery and post-conflict peacebuilding.

Thirdly, it is important to strengthen partnerships. Building upon efforts to establish strong partnerships with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the regional development banks, it is essential to continue such efforts to make certain that the commitment of those partners is translated into specific programmatic cooperation on the ground. We also continue to engage actively with civil society organizations.

Fourthly, we must ensure the coherence of the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission. We will continue to ensure that all parts of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture work in a coherent and

coordinated manner for the sole purpose of serving the people on the ground. As additional countries are expected to be referred to the Peacebuilding Commission, the Commission will continue to improve the efficiency of its working methods, with a clear sense of the added value of its engagement.

The Peacebuilding Commission is still a new and evolving organ. The political and substantive support of the members of the General Assembly is critical in order for the Commission to advance its activities. The Commission places great importance on strengthening interaction with the General Assembly, as one of its parent organs. Last January, I was invited by the President of the General Assembly to an informal plenary meeting to have an interactive dialogue with the broader membership. That was very useful. I would greatly appreciate similar interactions in the future.

As a result of a stalemate on the allocation of the seats among the regional groups for the elections in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, both organs decided to take interim measures to extend the terms of some members. I join you, Mr. President, in urging Member States to make maximum efforts to overcome the impasse as soon as possible.

The foundation was laid in the first year, and we began to produce results in the second year. The third year will be the real test for this developing organ. The Peacebuilding Commission must consolidate its achievements and help mobilize resources so that it can create a real difference on the ground and meet the high expectations of the international community. I would like to assure all members of our full dedication and commitment in that regard.

In concluding my remarks, allow me to make some brief remarks, in my national capacity, on the Peacebuilding Fund. The Fund was created to play a catalytic role in attracting new and additional resources. We welcome the fact that pledges to the Fund have now exceeded the original target of $250 million. The Fund is also expected to play a leading role in the immediate response to post-conflict situations. That unique role needs to be further strengthened. At the same time, it is important to improve accountability to donors and the international community. For instance, the selection of countries to be assisted by the Fund should be based upon clearer criteria. The review of the Fund's terms of reference will provide a valuable opportunity to ensure that it can better assist the countries in need.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate on the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund — two tools that were made available to the international community at the Millennium Summit.

I wish first of all to commend the Permanent Representative of Japan, who presides over the work of the Commission with determination and talent. I also salute the representatives of Belgium, Brazil, the Netherlands, Norway, El Salvador and Sweden both for chairing the various configurations of the Commission and for their unremitting efforts to clearly establish the Commission's added value within the United Nations system.

I would also like to welcome the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office and to thank the Secretary-General for his support for that office. My thanks go also to Ms. Carolyn McAskie, who laid the cornerstone of the structure, and Ms. Jane Holl Lute, who took office a month ago and to whom we wish every success.

I have the honour to address the Assembly today on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

It is all the more of an honour to address the Assembly as the theme of post-conflict stabilization is central to the thinking and priorities of the European Union, which has welcomed the solid achievements of the 2005 Summit and the broader goals pursued since that time, in particular the Secretary-General's reflection, initiated at the request of the Security Council, on a more organized, effective and rapid response to post-conflict challenges.

During its second year of work, the Peacebuilding Commission has made promising progress. The attention the international community focuses on the countries on its agenda has increased. The implementation of the peacebuilding strategies for Burundi and Sierra Leone — the first two countries on the agenda — continues to be based on a clearly

defined programme of work for the months ahead. On the ground, coordination has been strengthened. Various national political actors, civil society, partners and donors are discussing together practical ways to implement a common road map.

In that context, it is necessary to enhance the Peacebuilding Commission's visibility and its ability to drive and to influence others. It is noteworthy in that regard that countries that would clearly benefit from engaging with the Commission are reluctant to do so. Outreach efforts are needed, aimed at regional organizations in particular. The Commission might consider holding some of its meetings outside New York.

When speaking of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, it is important to remember that the issue is not just one of financial resources and that the Commission's vocation is not to become a new distributor of development assistance. All energies and resources should be mobilized; here I am thinking in particular the role of the diasporas. But it is true that in many cases, the key is to widen the circle of States and organizations supporting the efforts of the countries on the Commission's agenda. A particularly good example is the Central African Republic, where the Commission has an opportunity to develop mechanisms to ensure adequate mobilization of the international community.

The European Union would like to offer a few suggestions for the coming year on the focus of the Commission's work. First, we must encourage the efforts of the Peacebuilding Support Office to strengthen its capacity to act in support of the Commission. Secondly, the Commission should improve its working methods to become more effective and more strategic, especially in view of the possible inclusion of new countries on its agenda. Some instruments were developed last year. Today, the Commission needs fewer, but better prepared meetings. We must not hesitate to call on the coordination mechanism of the most committed States, such as the International Contact Group, on Guinea-Bissau for example. Moreover, we must work on identifying entry points for the Commission's engagement progressive reduction and conclusion. The Commission should discuss that with the Economic and Social Council.

Ultimately, the consolidation work of the Peacebuilding Commission should be integrated into Security Council strategies as expeditiously as possible. Similarly, the Commission must persuade the development stakeholders to bring their actions into line with a strategy of political and security stabilization by supporting overall efforts to enhance the coherence of the Organization as a whole.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The EU is firmly committed to supporting the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission and endorses the priorities that Ambassador Takasu has just proposed. The European Commission is actively engaged in all the countries on the Commission's agenda. The EU is one of the Commission's principal donors, if not the main one, in terms of budget, humanitarian and development assistance. It also participates in the development of peacebuilding strategies. Lastly, we must not forget that the EU can also support the implementation of the political and security parts of those strategies, particularly through the instruments of the European Security and Defence Policy, such as the Mission in Support of Security Sector Reform in Guinea-Bissau.

The EU notes that the international financial institutions are not lagging behind and have begun to adjust their instruments, as are regional and subregional actors, especially the African Union. The United Nations system is demonstrating thereby its ability to be more committed and ready to align itself with the strategies defined by the Commission.

Finally, I would like to return to the Peacebuilding Fund to which the States members of the EU individually have greatly contributed. The Fund is at the Secretary-General's disposal, but it is up to the Assembly to provide it with guidance. In that regard, the EU looks forward to the review by the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the recommendations of the Advisory Group. The Fund is an instrument to address the specific challenges of post-conflict stabilization and recovery that has not yet demonstrated its full potential.

For the EU, the priority is to improve the efficiency of its management and its ability to produce quick results on the ground, acting as a catalyst for other financial mechanisms of the United Nations system. To do that, it will no doubt be necessary to clarify the scope and criteria of its three windows. The general issue of responsibility is crucial to keeping the

Fund afloat in the future. We are ready forthwith to study the ways and means for the General Assembly to further improve the Fund's management.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): As coordinator of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) caucus in the Peacebuilding Commission, I am deeply honoured to address this Assembly on behalf of the Movement. I am particularly pleased and encouraged by the commitment shown and the continued valuable contributions of members of the Movement to the ongoing work of the Commission.

The Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the second report of the Peacebuilding Commission, as reflected in document A/63/92, and considers it to be an accurate account of the activities of the Commission over the period. I would like to say, too, that we also welcome the very informative and comprehensive report presented by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Movement also welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund, contained in document A/63/218.

Last year, when we adopted the first report, the Commission was embarking upon unfamiliar territory. Twelve months later, NAM is of the view that the Peacebuilding Commission is confidently on its way to making the solid contribution envisioned by the founding mandate, which emerged from the 2005 United Nations institutional reform package. NAM considers that the advancements made in the period under review points the Commission in the right direction.

The Movement was particularly pleased with the programme of work established by the Commission, especially efforts geared towards the fulfilment of its mandate. Pivotal in that regard were efforts made to accentuate the marshalling of resources and a genuine desire and commitment on the part of members of the Commission and other key players to enhance coordination of all peacebuilding activities on the ground in the countries on the Commission's agenda.

The Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the adoption of the Strategic Frameworks for Peacebuilding in Burundi, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone. Each Framework is a document that describes the Commission's engagement with the respective Governments and their partners. The principle of national ownership of the peacebuilding process by the Governments of the countries on the Commission's agenda — a priority for the Movement — was a central feature of the work of the Commission and in the development of each Framework.

The establishment of the monitoring and tracking mechanisms to check the progress of the implementation of the Frameworks is an indication of the commitment of the respective Governments, the Peacebuilding Commission and other stakeholders to success in the short and medium terms. The monitoring and tracking mechanisms will act as a tool to ensure that agreed targets are met and that the appropriate remedial action is taken, if and when such action becomes necessary.

In that context, the Movement welcomes the decision by the Commission to finance field missions to the countries on the Commission's agenda, the purpose of which is to equip the Commission with first-hand information to produce accurate analysis, with a view to assisting the decision-making process regarding the situations in those countries.

The addition of Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic to the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, at their request, should count among the Commission's highlights and achievements during the period under review. The impressive work already undertaken by the Commission with the new countries in such a short period of time demonstrates that lessons learned from the Commission's engagement with the first two countries on its agenda now form a fundamental basis for effective interaction and development of Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies between the Commission, the authorities of those countries and other key stakeholders and partners.

Despite the tremendous success of the Peacebuilding Commission, much obviously needs to be done to ensure that the overall gains are not eroded by instability or, in a worse-case scenario, a relapse into conflict. The Movement believes that one possible source of such a threat could come from the strict demands for peacebuilding strategies to be developed before Commission funds are allocated and that funds be linked to political commitments. That could backfire and severely hamper and undermine efforts towards consolidating the fragile peace process in those societies.

In addition, the Non-Aligned Movement continues to call for urgent and greater focus to be placed on the development agenda of the countries on

the Commission's agenda. The Movement is convinced that a focus on the development dimension will provide the sustained peace dividend necessary to galvanize support, bolster confidence and strengthen the peacebuilding process over a sustained and extended period.

NAM hereby encourages the Commission to consider the utilization of the diverse experience of countries within the membership of the Peacebuilding Commission to assist in the restructuring, upgrading and improvement of areas crucial to development: education and training, rural agricultural development, and capacity-building. Such assistance could be in the form of specific bilateral arrangements.

NAM underlines the importance of the relations and coherence between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund and advocates closer strategic ties between them in furtherance of the aim of a coordinated approach to the work of the Commission and, most importantly, to provide appropriate funding at critical moments. In that connection, the Movement looks forward to the total involvement of the Peacebuilding Commission in the General Assembly's review of the terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund in the not-too-distant future.

The Movement is appreciative of the confidence shown in the Peacebuilding Commission, and the Peacebuilding Fund in particular, as reflected in the recorded pledges which have exceeded the original target of the Fund. As the Commission becomes adept at fulfilling its mandate, so too will the demand for additional funding for peacebuilding projects. In that connection, the Movement takes this opportunity to call for the doubling of the target of the Fund to $500 million, in anticipation of that demand, and to prepare the Commission to be in a position to respond adequately to needs.

In looking ahead, NAM considers the upcoming review of the overall work and the processes of the Commission to be of crucial importance, as it will determine to a large extent how the Peacebuilding Commission conducts much of its work in the future. The Commission will need to ensure that best practices are further developed and maintained and that the provision of integrated peacebuilding strategies is tailored to fit each specific case. Additionally, the Commission will need to guarantee that collaboration and outreach with the main organs of the United Nations become standard practice and that the Organizational Committee finds its niche as the focal point of this body.

The matter of delays in the allocation of seats among the regional groups for the election of members of the Organizational Committee remains a matter of serious concern. The Movement believes that a permanent long-term solution is the only answer to what could become a hindrance and therefore curtail the important work of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Movement urges a quick resolution of that problem.

Finally, the Non-Aligned Movement takes this opportunity to congratulate the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission on his leadership over the period. Permit me also to express our appreciation for work undertaken by the respective Chairs of country-specific meetings, particularly to Brazil and Belgium, the recent Chairs of the country-specific configurations of Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic.

Kindly permit me also to express NAM's sincere appreciation to the Peacebuilding Support Office for its excellent contributions during the session, without which the good work of the Peacebuilding Commission would not have been possible at all.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The effective settlement of conflicts, lasting peace and sustainable development can be only achieved through coherence and a comprehensive strategic approach. It is precisely in that regard that Russia sees the key task of the Peacebuilding Commission, which has been designed to promote the enhancement of coordination and efficiency of international assistance supported by the United Nations, international financial institutions and the world donor community to countries emerging from crisis.

We take a positive view of the second year of the Commission's work. That organ possesses considerable potential and will likely become a key international instrument in the realm of coordinating peacebuilding activities. We particularly point to the role of the Peacebuilding Commission, in close cooperation with the Governments on its agenda, in identifying priorities of peacebuilding, determining gaps in existing international assistance mechanisms, and mobilizing necessary donor resources.

The Commission has made significant progress in its country-specific configurations. Together with the Governments of Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, Strategic Frameworks for Peacebuilding have been developed and adopted. In Burundi and Sierra Leone, the first biannual progress reviews have been carried out in priority areas of peacebuilding. The Commission has started to define peacebuilding priorities in the Central African Republic.

At the present stage, we see the main task of the Peacebuilding Commission to be the achievement of real progress at the country level through the coordinated implementation of peacebuilding strategies and monitoring and tracking mechanisms under the leadership of the recipient countries.

It is our belief that all peacebuilding activity must be based on a broad national dialogue among all political forces. We believe that the great merit of the Peacebuilding Commission lies precisely in the establishment of direct dialogue with national Governments, ensuring their national ownership and responsibility for peacebuilding processes.

We believe that the Commission should further enhance the coordination and effectiveness of the peacebuilding activities of the international community. In the coming year, it should continue to work on strengthening functional links with international financial institutions, regional organizations and the donor community in order to mobilize donor resources more effectively.

Additional attention needs to be paid to improving cooperation in the field with all peacebuilding actors in peacebuilding processes and to harmonizing the work of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Commission with the existing coordination mechanisms, primarily within the United Nations system. Such cooperation with United Nations institutions, particularly in the field, should not undermine existing operational activities of the Organization, but rather strengthen them.

It is particularly important to strengthen the organic link between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council, primarily in regard to common issues on their agendas. It is important to ensure the timely exchange of information between the two organs, a clear division of labour and complementarity. Of course, that must be done in parallel with the development of links between the Commission, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

We should like to highlight the important contribution of the Peacebuilding Support Office to the work of the Commission. We welcome the appointment of a new head of the Office, Ms. Jane Holl Lute. We hope that enhanced management and accountability of the Peacebuilding Fund will be among its priorities.

We support the focus of the work of the Fund on providing assistance to countries at the earliest stages of their emergence from conflict, and note its role as a stimulus in mobilizing more sustainable mechanisms in supporting of post-conflict recovery processes.

At the same time, we believe the time has come for a review of the terms of reference of the Fund and in that regard we await the proposals of the Secretariat. We would like to stress the importance of improving the assessment of peacebuilding needs, the soundness of the financial basis of projects, the establishment of implementation mechanisms and accountability. We want to see clarity, transparency and openness in the criteria for accessing its resources.

A clear manifestation of our support of the Peacebuilding Fund is the decision of the Russian Government to contribute $2 million annually. We expect that those funds will contribute to a real strengthening of the potential of the Fund in the areas I have mentioned.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): Since its inception in 2006, the Peacebuilding Commission has made substantial progress in assisting countries emerging from conflict. Brazil welcomes the annual report of the Commission presented by Ambassador Yukio Takasu, which provides an account of the numerous activities undertaken during the Commission's second year. The Commission has demonstrated its added value and is now consolidating its institutional niche within the United Nations system. I would like to praise the excellent work of Ambassador Takasu in leading us in this process.

The Commission has been able to adopt three Strategic Frameworks for Peacebuilding in Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. Those Strategies provide a valuable instrument for identifying challenges critical to the consolidation of peace, coordinating partners on the ground, raising awareness

of peacebuilding priorities and marshalling additional resources.

We welcome the beginning of the consideration of the fourth country on the Commission's agenda, the Central African Republic, under the chairmanship of Belgium. Brazil has always endorsed the view that the Commission should be ready to grow, take up new countries on its agenda and evolve as an important advisory body for post-conflict situations. Brazil also appreciates the work of Ambassador Carmen María Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador, Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned. The Group has been useful in promoting thematic discussions on matters of relevance to peacebuilding.

We welcome the initiative of holding strategic policy discussions in the Organizational Committee, a forum that could play a role in defining broad strategic guidelines for the Commission by promoting an inclusive dialogue on key aspects of peacebuilding. In particular, the debate on the participation of the private sector in peacebuilding activities, led by Indonesia, was an interesting and innovative exercise that will guide our efforts to persuade companies and foundations to play a more active role in peacebuilding activities.

The field trips undertaken by the Commission's members to the countries on its agenda are an invaluable tool for obtaining first-hand information about the situation on the ground and for maintaining a fruitful dialogue with local authorities, international partners and civil society. Brazil fully supports the continuity of that practice in the future. The Peacebuilding Support Office should be granted the necessary resources for organizing and supporting such missions.

Reaching out to institutions outside the United Nations system is important to ensure a coordinated and coherent response to peacebuilding challenges. Brazil is particularly pleased to note the growing interaction with the Bretton Woods institutions, the participation of which in the Commission's discussions has certainly contributed to our work. By the same token, it is necessary to maintain and enhance the ongoing dialogue with regional organizations, taking into account the regional dimension involved in many peacebuilding-related issues.

We believe that, in Guinea-Bissau and other countries emerging from conflict, the consolidation of peace relies on the triangle of security, the rule of law and economic development. The Strategic Framework adopted by the Guinea-Bissau configuration on 1 October was the result of extensive consultations with local authorities and relevant stakeholders. It highlights the importance of the upcoming legislative elections and recognizes as major priorities the promotion of economic growth and the rehabilitation of infrastructure, in particular in the energy field, security sector reform, justice sector reform, the consolidation of the rule of law, the fight against drug trafficking, public administration reform, and social issues critical to peacebuilding. The Strategic Framework will soon be complemented by a monitoring and review mechanism capable of gauging progress in each of the priority areas.

At the beginning of our work, the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission recommended a first allocation of resources from the Peacebuilding Fund to finance quick-impact projects that could yield immediate peace dividends to the population. Four projects have been set up in the areas of voter registration, youth employment and the rehabilitation of military barracks and prisons. A second and more substantive tranche is expected to be allocated soon.

The so-called two-track approach is proving to be a good innovation. However, the difficulties that currently account for its slow pace in the execution of the Fund's projects — in particular in the case of Guinea-Bissau — are a reminder of the need to strengthen the United Nations presence in countries on the Commission's agenda.

In conclusion, Brazil praises the work done and expects the Commission to continue to make progress in the years to come, thereby contributing to the improvement of the lives of millions of people in countries emerging from conflict.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the Peacebuilding Commission for its report on the work of its second session. We also wish to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his report on the operation of the Peacebuilding Fund. We support the relevant conclusions and recommendations contained in the reports. The Chinese delegation wishes to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Takasu, Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, for his efficient work.

Under his guidance, the Commission has made much headway over the past year.

It has been over two years since the Peacebuilding Commission was formally established. Over the past two years, the Commission, guided by the World Summit Outcome Document, has carried out in earnest its mandate under the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and put into practice the concept of peacebuilding around the globe, bringing hopes for peace and development to the countries and peoples concerned. If the Commission's work in its first year laid the foundation, then its performance in the second year further increased its influence, which can be seen in the following areas.

First, the number of subjects under its consideration has increased. After Burundi and Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic were added to the list, making up a total of four countries on the Commission's agenda. In addition, the Peacebuilding Fund is currently providing financial support to nine countries. It is fair to say that the expansion of the scope of work of the Commission and the Fund is both appropriate and efficient.

Secondly, the Commission has enhanced its ties with stakeholders inside and outside the United Nations by keeping lines of communication open with the main organs, including the Secretariat, and by strengthening links with the Bretton Woods institutions, regional organizations such as the African Union, the private sector and civil society.

Thirdly, it has increased its influence on the ground by sending missions to Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, demonstrating its resolve and commitment to peacebuilding. In formulating integrated peacebuilding strategies, the Commission invited the participation of representatives of all parties to hear a wide range of views. It provided timely financial support to Sierra Leone for its general and local elections and has been following the Burundi peace process closely.

Those achievements notwithstanding, the Peacebuilding Commission still faces internal and external challenges. Externally, the continuous turbulence of hotspot issues, the worsening global economic imbalance, the food crisis, a shortage of resources, frequent natural disasters and rampant epidemics have posed grave global challenges, particularly for countries and peoples at the lowest level of development. Internally, as a newly established body, the Commission still has a great deal of work to do in terms of improving its mechanism and rationalizing its structure.

With only two years to go before the 2010 evaluation of the Peacebuilding Commission, reality does not allow us to take a long pause for reflection. No time should be lost in further improving the Commission's work. China has every confidence in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. I wish to make the following suggestions for further improving its work.

First, coordination with other agencies must be enhanced and the Commission's unique advantages brought into play. In the face of ever-growing challenges, we must act in a collective manner. In some areas of peacebuilding, other United Nations agencies, the Bretton Woods system, such regional organizations as the European Union and the African Union, and bilateral assistance partners have already done a great deal of work and accumulated rich experience. The Peacebuilding Commission should maximize its coordinating role and seek to strengthen coordination among development mechanisms. In those areas where there has been less investment, the Peacebuilding Commission should use its advantages and play an active role by inviting the relevant parties to join the peacebuilding process. We should map out the use of resources more effectively and increase the impact of peacebuilding through coordination and cooperation.

Secondly, we should strengthen the partnerships with the countries concerned so as to bring their initiative fully into play. The countries concerned bear the primary responsibility for their own peacebuilding. Ultimately, the goal of peacebuilding is to build a peaceful and stable national system and, in peacebuilding, the local people are both the primary force to be relied upon as well as the biggest beneficiaries. We should have confidence in the local people and rely on local Governments, encouraging them to bring their wisdom into play and take part in the formulation of reconstruction plans so that they will devote themselves to the cause of peacebuilding with a sense of responsibility and ownership.

Thirdly, we should strengthen the Peacebuilding Commission's institution-building capacity and address various internal issues appropriately. We hope that Peacebuilding Commission members will strengthen

consultation, take each other's interests into account and appropriately address the question of member turnover. We expect the Peacebuilding Commission to streamline meetings, enhance efficiency, avoid formalities and ensure the quality of meetings. We are fully aware of the fact that there are differing views among Peacebuilding Commission members on the concept of peacebuilding and its priorities. We hope that members will enhance their exchange of views, increase mutual understanding and take divergent concerns into consideration.

With regard to the Peacebuilding Fund, in general the Chinese delegation is happy with its financing and operations. As a new financing mechanism, the Peacebuilding Fund is of great significance to initiating the relevant peacebuilding programmes. Its operation over the past two years has given an initial demonstration of its key catalyst role. In its future work, we hope that the secretariat of the Fund will continue to provide regular briefings to donors and the Peacebuilding Commission on the Fund's operations. We ask the management to expedite the allocation of financial resources and hope that the Secretary-General will strengthen the impact appraisal and accountability for projects. The Chinese Government will as always support the work of the Peacebuilding Fund.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to set out Peru's general view on post-conflict processes. I will begin by referring to national ownership of the peacebuilding process.

For Peru, each conflict has its own internal and international dynamics. In spite of the similarity of underlying economic or social factors, there are unique ethnic, tribal, constitutional or historical identities that ensure that no two cases are the same. Thus, in order to deal more effectively with post-conflict processes, we must recognize the particular circumstances of each case and not follow a single format. That is why my delegation considers the flexibility in the national configurations identified in the Peacebuilding Commission's report to be a key element of the progress achieved.

Secondly, my delegation believes that international actors should be aware that genuine ownership of the transition and peacebuilding processes will be more sustainable if those processes are carried out with the major social legitimacy fostered by a participatory approach. In addition celebrating political elections, we must verify practices, rules and institutions in order to achieve and implement agreements and settle disputes. That will make it possible to gradually extend State jurisdiction, affirm legitimate authority with the right to use force, consolidate central territorial control through reformed security institutions, define policies to provide public services, administer natural resources, encourage investment, and increase budgets with the goal of achieving self-sufficiency. As basic obligations, the rule of law must be respected and human rights protected.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/63/218) correctly considers Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies to be a central element of these two years of work in the post-conflict architecture. We also believe that field visits have served as a catalyst for concerted work within the States concerned.

From the outset, international cooperation should be devoted primarily to strengthening the political and conflict-resolution systems and the training of civilian professional officers. At the same time, we must emphasize that rapid-impact projects play a prominent role in raising awareness and garnering support among the local population. The participation of international financial institutions and local and international businesses is essential to the success of the process. We highlight the establishment of the task force on the role of the private sector in post-conflict situations, which addresses aspects of microfinance, remittances and associations with private foundations. We also encourage the task force to continue its work in relation to productive post-conflict investment.

It can be seen throughout the report that the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, Fund and Support Office calls for a medium- and long-term commitment backed by a strategic vision. That means that participation of the international community may, in agreement with the State concerned, extend for several years, over multiple priority areas and, in some cases, to great depth.

For those countries currently on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission or benefiting from the Peacebuilding Fund, it must always be clear that the cooperation and international assistance they receive are subject to the measurement of progress indicators in a context that supports the exercise of their

sovereignty, and in full respect for international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In terms of synergy with regional or international bodies and with institutions of the United Nations system, a long-term commitment requires the convergence of action and additional coordination efforts. The leadership of the United Nations guarantees legitimacy, transparency, coordination and adequate follow-up in the reconstruction process. To that end, we must ensure that our Organization has the capacity to analyse, evaluate, plan and coordinate among its major bodies in order to react to sudden changes on the ground that may jeopardize the peacebuilding process, and to make the resultant necessary adjustments.

The report of the Secretary-General provides a description of the current situation and progress made, as well as an overview of lessons learned, from which we can derive ideas for improving the work of our Organization, its bodies, funds and programmes to achieve more concerted action in that area.

Finally, my delegation wishes to reiterate its support for the work done by the Peacebuilding Commission and commend the leadership of its president, Ambassador Takasu of Japan. We encourage the Commission to continue contributing to peacebuilding in the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Burundi and other States that may request it.

Peru is a candidate for the Peacebuilding Commission in the elections to be held in 2009 and offers those ideas as a foretaste of the contribution that it hopes to make once the problem of the current regional underrepresentation is satisfactorily resolved for Latin America.

Mr. Punkrasin (Thailand): In the general debate at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly last week, Thailand reaffirmed its commitment to peace, freedom and tolerance, because they are part of our national character. The overarching principle of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security. Over the years, however, we have seen that, despite the greatest efforts of the United Nations, there have been some devastating setbacks in that regard. I am referring to situations of countries in the aftermath of conflict. As former Secretary-General Kofi Annan pointed out three years ago, half of all countries that emerge from war relapse into violence within five years. The fact is that, beyond peacekeeping, there is a critical need to build peace — one that is sustainable, one that lasts.

Two years ago, Thailand fully supported the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations new intergovernmental advisory body. The Commission was created to help fill the institutional gap at the United Nations in assisting post-conflict countries to address their peacebuilding challenges. Although the Commission is a newcomer to the United Nations family, within the course of just two years its role has proved invaluable, particularly in serving as a bridge between stakeholders in the peacebuilding process and between various stakeholders, such as United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and donor countries, and the countries on its agenda, namely, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic, so that resources can be mobilized and secured for peacebuilding projects in those countries.

Thailand would like to take this opportunity to commend the Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund for keeping Member States informed of their activities and the progress they have made on the ground. We are of the view that the Commission must continue to develop and improve its interaction and cooperation with the Fund, other organs and agencies in the United Nations system and all Member States. For effective concrete results, it is essential that the Commission and other bodies strive to work together to achieve coherence and close coordination in terms of policy and operations.

More importantly, the peacebuilding process must put strong emphasis on the principle of national ownership and participation. While the Commission helps the countries rebuild and strengthen themselves, it is the countries that have primary responsibility in making that work and endure, so that they can eventually stand on their own in the long run. The sense of ownership also signifies that the peacebuilding process must be adjusted to respond to the unique conditions, real needs and situations on the ground of the countries. The framework and strategy for peacebuilding should, therefore, be formulated in collaboration between the Commission and the countries by taking into account that complexity. A one-size-fits-all approach cannot be applied in that regard.

Thailand attaches great importance to the peacebuilding efforts of the United Nations. We also believe that sustainable peace must have its foundations in development. Through the development of political, economic and social systems and infrastructure the post-conflict peacebuilding process can bring about lasting peace, especially in those countries where United Nations peacekeeping forces have just completed their mandates. The role of civilians, the private sector and civil society in the peacebuilding process should also be supported and promoted.

Thailand has a firm policy of supporting United Nations peace operations and we have consistently participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Besides their peacekeeping role, Thai military and police personnel have also contributed to building peace and laying foundations in several countries emerging from conflict, particularly in the areas of development, security sector reform and the rule of law.

Just last month, Thailand and the United States co-organized the Association of South-East Asian Nations Regional Forum workshop in Bangkok on stabilization and reconstruction. It provided an opportunity for member countries of the Forum to exchange their ideas and experiences on the effective stabilization and reconstruction measures that help maintain the stability of countries affected by conflict and natural disasters.

With our experience, expertise and conviction, Thailand is confident that we can contribute to the peacebuilding efforts in post-conflict areas through the development schemes of the United Nations. Therefore, Thailand has presented its candidature for membership in the Commission for 2009 to 2011 in the General Assembly category. With the endorsement of the Asian Group, we hope to join the Commission soon.

Thailand is pleased that the Peacebuilding Fund has surpassed its target of $250 million of contributions. We believe that, working in collaboration with the Commission, the Fund will be even more beneficial to countries in need of sustainable peace. Since the establishment of the Fund, Thailand has contributed $10,000 and will contribute more this year.

As the Commission enters its third year of activities, there is no doubt that more difficult challenges lie ahead. Thailand is ready to lend its full support to the Commission, and to the United Nations as a whole, in its endeavours to create sustainable peace throughout the world.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to express my appreciation to the Peacebuilding Commission for its report (A/63/92) and to the Secretary-General for his report (A/63/218 and Corr.1) on the Peacebuilding Fund. Egypt aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Egypt believes in the important role played by the Commission in preventing post-conflict countries from relapsing into conflicts. That is why, it has sought to join the Commission since its establishment in order, to participate efficiently in all its meetings and activities and work on helping the Commission to implement its tasks, enshrined in General Assembly resolution 60/180.

Since its establishment in 2005, the Commission has achieved great progress in Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, as well as its current work on behalf of the Central African Republic. Those achievements impose on us an obligation to double our efforts and present new ideas and proposals to enhance the performance of the Commission, to make it more efficient in dealing with the situations in the countries under its consideration and more capable of adding to its agenda additional countries that may request the assistance of the Commission.

In that regard, I would like to highlight some of the practical points that Egypt thinks should be taken into consideration.

First, the Commission should promote adherence to the principle of national ownership in all stages of its work. That principle should be applied starting with the request for the Commission's assistance and onto identifying and implementing the peacebuilding priorities and terminating its work, particularly since that principle enhances the trust of the concerned countries and consolidates the cooperation of the national authorities with the Commission on the governmental, parliamentarian and public levels.

Second, the Commission's ongoing efforts to function efficiently require it to continue strengthening

its relations with various relevant United Nations organs, departments and programmes, as well as with the international financial institutions, donor countries and regional and subregional organizations concerned with peacebuilding, particularly those in the same regions as the countries under the Commission's consideration.

While I thank the Chairman of the Commission and the Chairs of the country-specific configurations of the four countries for their work to that end, there remains a compelling need for the Commission to promote its institutional relations with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Those relations need further delineation and clarification in order to promote full respect for the institutional balance between those organs, in accordance with the jurisdiction of each under the Charter, and to prevent the encroachment of any principal organ upon the jurisdictions of the others.

In that context, I request the General Assembly to assume a more active role in monitoring and directing the work of the Peacebuilding Commission by convening regular sessions to review its activities, evaluate the conclusions of its field visits, and find ways to support it, along the lines of the periodic meetings convened by the Security Council to that end.

Third, the diversity of the categories of membership of the Peacebuilding Commission should be exploited to maximum benefit. Resolution 60/180 states that the composition of the Commission shall comprise representatives of the top contributors to peacekeeping operations and the United Nations budget and members of the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. From its very inception, the Commission was intended to benefit from the diverse nature and experience of all those categories in a way that would assist it in its work. However, practical experience has shown that the Commission has not benefited as desired from its members' affiliation with those categories. Egypt would therefore propose that the Commission discuss that important issue at its coming session to consider ways to make full use of the diversity of its membership.

Fourth, it is important that the Commission benefit from the lessons learned with respect to its working methods and provisional rules of procedure so that they may be taken into account in the 2010 review process. In that regard, I would refer to the method of applying the concept of fair geographical distribution. In stressing the need for the President of the General Assembly to make further efforts to resolve that issue, Egypt, in its capacity as coordinator of the African Group on peacebuilding issues, asserts that the solution must not lead to a decrease in the number of seats allocated to Africa from the seven already allocated in all categories. I also affirm that if there is any increase in the number of seats allocated to any other regional group, Africa should be given an extra seat or seats in addition to the seven currently allocated to it.

Fifth, it is important to promote the role of the Commission in setting a balance between donor and non-donor countries in peacebuilding activities. In that regard, I refer to the role of the steering committees in the countries under consideration in identifying projects to be financed by the Peacebuilding Fund. I stress that the steering committees are not competent to make financial decisions or to direct the Secretary-General to provide financing. That jurisdiction falls exclusively to the Commission, particularly given the limited membership of the steering committees, which include only the donor countries and the Secretariat but exclude non-donor States members of the Commission.

Sixth, it is necessary to prepare a strategy that allows civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to participate in various fields related to peacebuilding, in coordination with and upon approval of the countries under consideration and with the aim of marshalling all efforts.

Seventh, the General Assembly should also lend its full support to the Peacebuilding Support Office and provide it with the posts and financial resources necessary to fulfil its role thoroughly. The General Assembly should provide the necessary funds from the budget of the Organization for two annual field trips by the Commission to each of the countries on its agenda, with the participation of representatives from all regional groups. That would promote direct contact between the members of the Commission and the national authorities in the countries under consideration.

The relation between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund is considered to be among the most important issues that will be taken up in the coming phase, particularly in the context of reviewing the Fund's terms of reference. We

commend the increasing international support for the activities of the Fund, as reflected in the $238.5 million of pledged financing deposited in its accounts. Through peacebuilding strategies and the emergency window, that money has financed 37 projects in nine countries since the Fund was established.

While Egypt agrees with the report with respect to the steps taken to review the terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund, it confirms its support for any effort that would contribute to developing the work of the Fund, improve coordination and coherence between its activities and the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission, and enhance its ability to work expeditiously and efficiently, particularly in disbursing the funds allocated to specific projects in the countries under the Commission's consideration. Egypt also supports the proposal in the report to expand the membership of the Peacebuilding Fund Advisory Group, given its vital oversight of the Fund's activities. Egypt also supports the proposal to direct Peacebuilding Fund support for the activities of regional and subregional organizations in the fields of peacebuilding. Egypt reiterates its proposal that an annual donor conference be held to ensure the necessary financial support for the budget of the Fund.

Moreover, Egypt proposes that the review process consider increasing the funding target of the Peacebuilding Fund to make it capable of financing bigger projects and to enhance consultation and coordination between the Secretary-General and the Commission when the former believes that a particular country is eligible to receive financing from the Fund, in order to prevent duplication and rationalize expenditures.

In conclusion, we thank the Permanent Representative of Japan for his distinguished presidency of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Permanent Representatives of Belgium, Brazil, El Salvador, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden for their valuable guidance of the Commission's work. I also thank the Peacebuilding Support Office for its strenuous efforts over the past year and wish its new leadership every success.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): May I join those colleagues who have thanked the President of the General Assembly for organizing this important debate today. It offers a useful opportunity to take stock of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund and to charter the challenges we still face. Those challenges include how we can improve our support to countries in the early stages of their emergence from conflict.

I would like to align myself with the statement made by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union.

It is important to celebrate success, so I would like to begin by thanking Ambassador Takasu for his dedicated chairing of the Organizational Committee, and the Permanent Representatives of the Netherlands, Norway and Brazil for the achievements made on Sierra Leone, Burundi and Guinea-Bissau. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of El Salvador for her leadership on lessons learned and the Permanent Representative of Indonesia for championing work on the Peacebuilding Commission's engagement with the private sector.

In addition, I would like to welcome Sweden in taking over the chair of the country-specific configuration for Burundi, and Belgium in taking up responsibilities for the Central Africa Republic.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the support that Carolyn McAskie provided in getting the Peacebuilding Commission up and running and to welcome the appointment of Jane Holl Lute as her successor.

In last year's debate I highlighted the need for the Commission to give more focus to how it could provide added value to the peacebuilding processes in the countries on its agenda. The primary impact of the Commission lies, of course, in helping to address the political barriers to peacebuilding and bringing coherence to the international community's efforts.

The United Kingdom shares others' assessments of how well the Peacebuilding Commission has taken up this challenge, but it is also true, as many speakers have noted, that there remain a number of challenges. I would like to highlight five of those challenges as we see them today.

Firstly, the Commission needs to be better at measuring its impact. We need to live up to our commitments, including mobilizing resources. But as the first biannual reviews demonstrated, we currently do not have the means to quantify what additional resources have actually been mobilized.

Secondly, the Commission needs to be more specific. We need to get much better at identifying what are the actual, critical gaps in funding and setting out tangible benchmarks on how frameworks should be implemented. Our ability to mobilize resources will improve if we can specifically state what is required and how those resources would be best channelled. We need to ensure that sufficient investment is made in analysis and monitoring and that the United Nations system is providing the Peacebuilding Support Office the requisite inputs to achieve this.

Thirdly, the Commission needs to be more efficient. With new countries on the Commission's agenda, this is particularly important. We should focus on fewer, but more strategic meetings in New York, with most of the day-to-day work being led in the countries themselves.

Fourthly, the Commission needs to be more flexible and agile. We need to make sure the Commission's engagement adapts to the changing realities on the ground, such as the new threat posed by fuel and food prices. We also need to make sure that the Commission is not formulaic when it approaches each new country, but that it tailors its engagement to the challenges faced with each new context. In this vein, we have found the approach adopted for the Central African Republic very encouraging.

Fifthly, the work of the Commission needs to be better aligned and more inclusive. Governments clearly lead the process. But if we want long-lasting success, all sectors of society need to be involved to ensure this. Success is also more likely if steps are made to prevent uncoordinated donor programmes that pull Governments in several directions at once.

The Peacebuilding Commission needs to ensure that the international community is a more responsible partner to the Government and that political, security, recovery and development engagement is all better integrated.

In going forward this year, we need to consider whether the new peacebuilding architecture is filling the gaps we set it up to fill. It has demonstrated that it can play a useful role in countries once United Nations peacekeeping missions have drawn down. But as the 20 May Security Council debate on post-conflict peacebuilding highlighted, the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund also have a potentially critical role to play in countries emerging from conflict.

At that debate, my Foreign Secretary stated that the challenge faced is to tackle the current statistic in which 30 per cent of conflicts break out again with five years of a peace agreement.

The critical gaps that were highlighted at that debate are: better international leadership to ensure a common strategy that can drive forward integrated political, security and development activities all in support of national efforts; increased national and international civilian capacities to plan and implement stabilization and recovery efforts; and faster, more flexible funding.

Recent meetings in London and Copenhagen have also highlighted the importance of improving the international community's support to conflict-affected countries in the very early stages of peacebuilding.

In the case of funding, the Peacebuilding Fund has the potential to fill the current gap in the provision of timely, flexible and predictable funding to countries emerging from conflict. Indeed, it was set up to support early peacebuilding efforts but has, in reality, primarily supported later-stage peacebuilding.

We hope the Office of Internal Oversight Services evaluation report will put forward concrete recommendations on how to enable the Peacebuilding Fund to provide support earlier in the process. And the upcoming review of the Fund's terms of reference will provide a good opportunity to make the Peacebuilding Fund more effective and responsive.

It is important that the Peacebuilding Commission engages with this process and feeds into the Secretary-General's report on how the United Nations can improve its support to early recovery. The desire of the membership to have that engagement from the Peacebuilding Commission was something that my country and my Foreign Secretary took away very strongly from the 20 May debate and we hope that we can react to that.

The United Kingdom remains committed to the Peacebuilding Commission and we look forward to our continued close engagement with colleagues in the coming year.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): My delegation wishes to thank the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding

Commission, Ambassador Takasu, for presenting the annual report of the Commission (A/63/92-S/2008/417) and also to thank the Secretary-General for presenting his annual report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218-S/2008/522).

My delegation wishes to align itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We believe the Peacebuilding Commission report contains a fair assessment of the activities of the Commission during its second session, i.e. how far we have come and what remains to be done. From a comparative analysis of the present report and the previous one, we may reasonably conclude that so far so good, but we dare not underestimate the challenges ahead.

Today's debate offers us a unique opportunity to critically examine where our collective peacebuilding efforts may have fallen short of expectations, reflect on what we could have done better and think through creative ways of consolidating the gains we have made.

There have been noticeable successes in Sierra Leone and Burundi. Lessons learnt in those two countries have certainly improved our approach to handling the cases of Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic.

My delegation is pleased with the early adoption of the integrated Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau and look forward to working with the Chair and members of that configuration towards the attainment of the objectives and priorities spelt out in the framework, including ensuring the success of the forthcoming elections in Guinea-Bissau.

While recognizing the importance of the cardinal principles of national ownership and international partnership, my delegation would like to reemphasize that an all-inclusive peacebuilding paradigm requires the Peacebuilding Commission to actively mobilize the support of regional and subregional organizations and civil society, among other stakeholders, in post-conflict reconstruction.

The Peacebuilding Commission is certainly taking shape, allowing it to devote more attention to issues of substance instead of procedure. But it is essential to keep our working methods under constant review to make us work smarter and better and to develop a strategic vision for the future of the Commission, so that we are not overtaken by events.

In this regard, we appreciate the fact that with the support of the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Commission has adopted proactive tools such as the monitoring and tracking mechanisms, videoconferencing, mapping of resources and the setting up of integrated country offices and strategic frameworks.

However, our long-term strategic vision will require new tools such as the development of an early warning mechanism. For the foreseeable future, my delegation thinks that the General Assembly, in collaboration with the Security Council and other relevant bodies of the United Nations, should take a strategic decision to strengthen the capacity of the Peacebuilding Commission for preventive diplomacy.

This means that in the medium to long term, the Peacebuilding Commission should be concerned not only about preventing countries currently on its agenda from relapsing into conflict, but also about developing the capacity to anticipate potential conflicts and engaging the international community to address them before they reach crisis proportions.

Some researchers have argued that it takes a minimum of 10 years for peacekeeping to succeed. While we may not be in a position to validate that claim, what we would urge is that peacebuilding and peacekeeping not be viewed as zero-sum games in which the deployment of peacebuilding would necessarily lead to the termination of peacekeeping mandates. We need to strike the right balance between entry and exit strategies, so that peacebuilding operations are neither prematurely terminated nor unduly extended to create a dependency syndrome in the affected country on the agenda.

As the time for a review of the terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund draws near, it is appropriate to deepen dialogue among Member States on how to strengthen the institutional links and working relations between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. There is a need to increase the role of the Commission in decisions made by the Fund in allocating resources to beneficiary countries, so as to improve coordination and avert possible duplication of efforts. In the meantime, we welcome the improvement in the lines of communication between the Fund and the Commission and the Fund's effectiveness in raising

more funds than the amount targeted during the period under consideration.

I wish to conclude by recalling the distinguished and pioneering contribution of Ambassador Carolyn McAskie, former Assistant-Secretary-General and head of the Peacebuilding Support Office, in operationalizing the peacebuilding architecture, and to wish her the very best in her future endeavours. My delegation also wishes to take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome Ms. Jane Holl Lute, new Assistant-Secretary-General and head of the Support Office, who has already demonstrated her commitment to build upon the work of her predecessor, and to assure her of Ghana's full cooperation. Finally, we commend the stewardship of Ambassador Takasu in skilfully guiding the affairs of the Peacebuilding Commission to consolidate the success achieved in the course of its first session. In his statement, Ambassador Takasu appropriately recognized the contributions of the past and present Chairs of the various configurations of the Commission. If their effectiveness is to be enhanced, the Commission and the Support Office must be well resourced.

Finally, Ghana remains committed and ready to support the Peacebuilding Commission in meeting the challenges ahead — some of which have been identified in the report before us and in some of the statements we have heard today — for the sake of solidarity, humanity, peace and security.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): We welcome this debate, which offers a good opportunity to the general membership to take stock of the United Nations peacebuilding agenda, which has assumed increasing priority and prominence ever since the 2005 World Summit.

As reflected in the Peacebuilding Commission's annual report (A/63/92), the new peacebuilding architecture has made appreciable progress, both in further developing system-wide institutional linkages and in promoting substantive work in the countries under consideration. As a member of the Commission, Pakistan is fully committed to its success. We appreciate the contributions of all members of the Commission, in particular the Chairman, the Vice-Chairs and the Chairs of the country-specific configurations. We shall continue to contribute to that collective effort by actively participating in the work of the Commission and by providing assistance to the countries concerned to the best of our ability.

The expansion of the Commission's agenda, which now includes four countries, is an indication of the growing confidence in its work. That has increased expectations — and rightly so — especially those of the Governments and peoples of the countries under consideration. It also entails better organization of the Commission's work, especially increased coherence and prioritization among its various formats and the dedication of appropriate time and resources to the various situations on the agenda.

At the strategic level, the experience gained by the Peacebuilding Commission should guide the development of a common vision of peacebuilding. In our view, the following are the keys to success: first, greater convergence between the perspectives of the partners and the host countries, based primarily on the priorities and the national ownership of the latter; secondly, genuine political will and flexibility on the part of all stakeholders; and thirdly, involvement by the Commission from the initial phase of United Nations engagement in countries emerging from conflict. A comprehensive approach based on interlinkage between peace and development should traverse all stages, from conflict prevention to peacekeeping to peacebuilding.

Sustainable development and the utilization of national capacities are essential to ensure national ownership of peacebuilding priorities. Strategies based on an objective and comprehensive diagnosis of the situation, including the root causes of conflict, are more likely to succeed. Integrated peacebuilding strategies and cooperation frameworks should be living plans of action, under constant review and capable of adjustment as the situation demands. The Commission's monitoring and tracking tools will need to be further refined to ensure identification of new gaps and timely and full implementation of the commitments undertaken by all sides.

It is extremely important to provide resources at the early stages for immediate peacebuilding priorities and quick-impact and other projects with catalytic effect. The utility of the Peacebuilding Fund is clear in that regard. It is important to keep the interests of the recipient countries paramount in the identification, design and prioritization of the projects to be resourced from the Fund. The timely and effective disbursement

of funds is equally important. In our view, increased coordination and coherence between the activities of the Fund and those of the Commission could yield better results in that regard. The Commission's guidance would be extremely relevant in the review process of the terms of reference of the Fund.

In the last analysis, the success of the Commission will be gauged in terms of the concrete results achieved for people on the ground. With a view to effective prevention against relapse, the ultimate objective of peacebuilding should be to enable countries emerging from conflict to stand on their own feet so as to achieve self-sustained peace and development. That involves the fulfilment of commitments by national and international stakeholders and the mobilization of resources, both internal and external. This is where the Commission, because of its unique composition and convening power, has immense potential to deliver. It needs to further strengthen its advocacy role so as to tap all avenues for the marshalling of adequate and predictable resources from the early stages to the extended period of international attention.

Working on both sides, the Commission can also help address the issues of donor restrictions and conditionalities, on the one hand, and absorptive capacity and mechanisms for the effective and transparent disbursement and utilization of resources, on the other. The Commission can also promote the cause of the countries on its agenda more effectively before the international financial institutions, which should be encouraged to show the operational flexibility to address the special circumstances of countries emerging from conflict.

The Commission will also need to focus attention on broader issues, including aid effectiveness, trade, investment, official development assistance, debt relief and development of the private sector. The work facilitated by Indonesia on the role of the private sector should be taken forward. Many countries afflicted by complex conflicts continue to be deprived of revenues and earnings from their own resources, owing to unequal trade regimes, industrial-country agricultural subsidies and the inability to process their own raw materials. Therefore, more attention has to be accorded to national and international mechanisms to halt the illegal exploitation of natural resources and enable the countries concerned to make full use of their resources for the benefit of their own peoples.

The Organizational Committee, the nucleus of the Commission, is best placed to discuss those and several other cross-cutting and thematic issues. It is time to utilize its full potential. It should have strategic oversight over the work of the Commission, including country-specific meetings and the Working Group on Lessons Learned. Energizing the Organizational Committee would also contribute to increased coordination among the stakeholders — in particular the three relevant principal organs — which is so essential for the success of our work.

The challenges of peacebuilding are complex and immense. They require a holistic approach based on sustained political attention and the pooling of necessary resources. The Peacebuilding Commission can deliver only with the full support and commitment of the international community.

In that regard, I would like to conclude on an encouraging note. Notwithstanding the differences of opinion among Member States, the collective objective of bringing tangible benefits to the countries under consideration is becoming a rallying point for the Commission's work.

Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata (Italy): I would like to thank the President of the Assembly for organizing this debate on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund.

Italy endorses the statement of the French presidency of the European Union.

The Commission is now entering its third year of operations. We are beginning to see concrete results: four countries are on the agenda, three integrated strategies have been approved, one is in the making, and monitoring mechanisms have been established. The international community is paying greater attention to peacebuilding efforts.

The work undertaken by the Commission in identifying priority areas in respect of the principle of national ownership is most welcome. National ownership is the necessary foreground for the success of Commission strategies, which also involve international stakeholders, non-governmental organizations and civil society. It is also the foreground for implementation strategies, benchmarks and timelines, the optimization of resources and efforts to avoid the overlapping of programmes.

The Commission has consolidated its status and credibility. Countries that need assistance with their stabilization processes are aware of its resources. The international financial institutions are now fully involved in the Commission's deliberations.

It is time to move forward, addressing new challenges in a creative and flexible way. Peace processes must be seen as a whole. Peacekeeping missions should be fully coherent with peacebuilding strategies. Therefore, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs and the Peacebuilding Support Office should be encouraged to improve their integrated planning processes.

On the other hand, the Commission could further enhance its role by aiming for more effective dialogue and coordination among all stakeholders, including, in particular, regional and subregional organizations. We see four main challenges for the Commission in the coming months: first, it must translate the integrated strategies into concrete action; secondly, it must mold its fieldwork to local needs; thirdly, it must give stakeholders the opportunity to become more involved; and fourthly, it must assess its added value in bridging the existing gaps in the stabilization process. The Commission has to adapt its work to different contexts in order to assure the proper links between security, development and respect for human rights.

Turning now to the Peacebuilding Fund, the second report sheds greater light on the role, value and general constraints of that financial instrument within the framework of United Nations peace consolidation efforts. We look positively on the fact that, in its second year of operations, the Fund has been more dynamic in identifying beneficiary countries and needs for intervention. The Fund has also focused more on improving analytical capacities and planning, on enhancing coordination with the United Nations offices in New York and in the field, and on greater interaction with the Commission.

However, the Fund has not yet developed its full potential. It has not provided the immediate post-conflict response that we had hoped for. There is clearly a need to tackle strategy and management issues, such as the criteria for selecting beneficiary countries, the time frame for drafting and approving projects, local Governments' financial and institutional absorption capability, countries' eligibility for the various windows and the Fund's mobilizing force.

We would thus like to offer a few suggestions. We should improve intervention planning and foster greater consistency between the Fund's funding and integrated peacebuilding strategies; develop clear guidelines, agreed on by all Members, for the selection of eligible countries and establish a fund replenishment mechanism to enable consistent and predictable use of resources; harmonize the time frames for choosing beneficiary countries for the three different windows; and develop a strategy for the donor community that will allow the Fund to become a reference point and catalyst of resources.

Lastly, allow me to express my deepest gratitude for their efforts to the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Permanent Representative of Japan; the Chairman of the Working Group on Lessons Learned, the Permanent Representative of El Salvador; and the Chairmen of the country-specific configurations, the Permanent Representatives of the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the Permanent Representative of Brazil and the Permanent Representative of Belgium. We also thank the Peacebuilding Support Office in New York and in the field, and welcome newly appointed Assistant Secretary-General Lute as the head of the Office.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): Allow me first to express our appreciation to the President of the Assembly for convening this important joint debate on the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/63/92) and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218). We thank the Secretary-General for the presentation of his report on the Fund, and the Commission for its second annual report. We commend the good work of the Peacebuilding Support Office, which works closely with the members of the Commission. Our appreciation also goes to the United Nations Development Programme as the administrative agent of the Fund. Of course, we would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Japan and Chairman of the Commission for his sterling leadership.

Indonesia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus in the Commission.

Having been entrusted with the responsibility of being a member of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission for the past two years, Indonesia is pleased to see the Commission and the

Fund embark upon the fulfilment of their mandates. In that regard, my delegation will like to offer some remarks that would hopefully contribute to making the international peacebuilding architecture more robust.

First, when identifying peacebuilding priorities and challenges, the Commission has rightly pointed out the importance of giving equal attention to the issues of security, democracy and development. Those are key factors for nurturing a strong pluralistic society and lasting peace. Security sector reform or economic sector reform alone is not a panacea to ensure that a post-conflict country does not relapse into conflict.

There needs to be an integrated approach and, in order to implement a comprehensive approach in which the security and development dimensions reinforce each other, the disbursements by the Peacebuilding Fund should also reflect such an orientation. Indonesia also desires to see such an integrated approach be implemented in the wider United Nations system, including in the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs, to address post-conflict challenges.

Secondly, all agree that national ownership should be the guiding principle in our engagement. We fully support the fact that the voice of a democratically elected Government, that can be held accountable to the people through elections, should be the bedrock of a nationally owned process, taking into account the voices of civil society and other relevant stakeholders in the field. No matter how well-intentioned the international initiatives are, the needs identified by the national Government should be considered the blueprint by everyone. Time and again, we have seen that peace processes and the consolidation of peace work only if peace and development efforts are owned by society and fully assisted by the international community.

Thirdly, we should not shy away from giving more decisive and strategic roles to the Organizational Committee of the Commission. That is in line with the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission. While the four country-specific configurations under the good leadership of the present and past chairpersons have shown the benefits of the unique composition of country configurations, the Organizational Committee should continue to focus on thematic strategies and wider policies on peacebuilding.

In that regard, we commend the Organizational Committee efforts under the chairmanship of Japan in considering the role of the private sector in peacebuilding and for underscoring its potential engagement in providing both financial and non-financial support.

A task force set up for that purpose by the Organizational Committee earlier this year focused on tangible ways through which the Peacebuilding Commission can contribute to the strengthening of the private sector's engagement in post-conflict peacebuilding, as part of the Commission's mandate to bring together all relevant actors to marshal support and resources. That consideration included three particular areas, partnerships with private foundations, microfinance and remittances. As a follow-up to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission task force, we hope that the Organizational Committee will consider taking up some of the task force's recommendations for fulfilling the Commission's mandate to marshal resources.

The strategic role and policy deliberations of the Organizational Committee will be crucial. The Security Council, through its presidential statement S/PRST/2008/16 of 20 May 2008, has also encouraged the Peacebuilding Commission to explore ways to support national efforts in affected countries to secure sustainable peace more rapidly and effectively. The views of the Peacebuilding Commission are also very helpful when the Secretary-General provides advice to the United Nations organs on how to coordinate peacebuilding activities and to generate and utilize resources most effectively.

Fourthly, as stated in the report, the Commission should continue to make efforts to create closer strategic ties between its engagements and the use of the Peacebuilding Fund. The report highlights the need to have innovative approaches to linking the initial catalytic financial outlay through the Peacebuilding Fund with more sustained and significantly larger funding sources.

As it has been noted, the Peacebuilding Fund disbursement and implementation are based on three mechanisms: window I for countries under the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, window II for non-Peacebuilding Commission countries and window III for emergency situations. The Secretary-General has the discretionary authority for windows II and III. For

window I, there is still room to improve relations between the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund.

We note the excellent work of the Peacebuilding Support Office in this regard, but we stress that the involvement of the Peacebuilding Commission members in steering the process should be greater. The countries should be involved from the early planning stage of identifying the projects and in the establishment of clear evaluation mechanisms.

For windows II and III, we commend the important work of the Secretary-General in their effective utilization. The Member States could be involved further by, inter alia, improving the terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund. By further involving the Member States in the strategic decision-making process for windows II and III, the effectiveness of the Fund would improve, and the ownership of Member States would increase.

It is also important to start mapping out ways on how the private sector can be brought on board for its valuable contribution to the Peacebuilding Fund. We are positive that the recommendations of the Peacebuilding Commission task force on the private sector would also be helpful here. The United Nations Development Programme could take up those practical recommendations, and if the Peacebuilding Commission agrees, views could be sought from the Programme on how further concrete steps might be undertaken to engage the private sector entities.

Fifthly, public awareness and visibility of the Commission's work should be improved by making the work of the Peacebuilding Commission prominent in regional and subregional organizations, as well as at the international financial institutions and other pertinent forums.

Finally, I would like to share a few thoughts on how Indonesia sees the General Assembly playing its important role in ensuring that the United Nations peacebuilding machinery functions well to produce maximum output in the field.

The General Assembly can be very helpful, and must exert greater effort in seeing that the United Nations departments and agencies incorporate the peacebuilding priorities and challenges appropriately in the relevant strategies of the United Nations system.

In that regard, the President of the General Assembly could play his critical convening role by holding regular and substantive interactions among the Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Therein, relevant lessons learned and best practices can be shared, with the development of new synergies. Such exchanges can also ensure better coordination among those vital bodies. Their combined voice will aid the advocacy for the Commission, particularly with regard to garnering assistance for the recommendations of Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies of the countries on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda.

Indonesia reiterates its commitment to the cause of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund and will continue to work with others on tangible measures to improve the outcome of both.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): It is my pleasure to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

I wish to express our support for the statement delivered by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union.

The Nordic countries recognize the progress made since the establishment in 2006 of the Peacebuilding Commission, in particular the important work of the country-specific configurations.

We welcome the appointment of Jane Holl Lute and her efforts to further strengthen the capacity and improve the focus of the Peacebuilding Commission. With the support of the Peacebuilding Support Office, we need to streamline the working methods of the Commission to allow for more countries on the agenda and to focus our efforts at the strategic level to deliver on the vision of the Peacebuilding Commission.

In that regard, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of seeking partnerships and coherence in relevant activities within and outside the United Nations with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, regional and subregional organizations, and international financial institutions.

Within the peacebuilding architecture, we see a need to better define the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office in terms of giving assistance and support to the Peacebuilding Commission. The Peacebuilding Support Office should have a key

function in the strategic planning of the peacebuilding efforts of the United Nations.

At the same time, we need to explore ways to create synergies in order to respond to the challenges facing countries emerging from conflict in a coherent, timely and rational way. To that end, we strongly support the Peacebuilding Support Office's role in coordinating the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and early recovery, and look forward to actively engaging in the process of providing recommendations.

We wish to draw attention to the Early Recovery Policy Forum held earlier this month in Copenhagen, where a number of international policymakers and practitioners were gathered to put forward proposals on how to address gaps in capacity, strategy and funding when it comes to early recovery and peacebuilding. The Forum highlighted, inter alia, the need to speed up post-disaster damage and needs assessments, as well as the necessity of rapidly scaling up the capacity of resident coordinators in a crisis situation. We consider those and other conclusions of the Forum very useful in our efforts to further strengthen the Peacebuilding Commission and the wider peacebuilding architecture.

Our delegations have been strong contributors to the Peacebuilding Fund, which we believe to be a vital tool to address immediate needs in countries emerging from conflicts. In conflict environments, speed is of the essence. We clearly see room for improvement in the management of the Fund in order for it to work efficiently as a catalyst for more sustained support mechanisms.

We look forward to the Office of Internal Oversight Services review and the recommendations of the Peacebuilding Fund Advisory Group later this month in order to further improve the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the Fund. We hope the evaluation will provide clear recommendations to address questions regarding the Fund's function.

The Nordic countries would welcome further clarity on the scope and allocation procedure for the three funding windows, an improved and transparent accountability framework and strengthened capacity in the management of the Fund. We think that the in-country relationship between the Fund and the Commission could be further clarified. Furthermore, peacebuilding gaps continue to go unfilled, and we would consider it useful to revisit the possibility of using the Fund's funds to support United Nations Secretariat entities and their missions. We look forward to working with Member States and to considering improvements to the Fund in the context of this Assembly.

In closing, allow me to express the gratitude of the Missions of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden for the reports submitted under these agenda items. They contain valuable information and form a good basis for our discussions.

Ms. Jahan (Bangladesh): It would be remiss of me to begin without thanking Ambassador Yukio Takasu for his excellent stewardship of the Peacebuilding Commission and his presentation of the Commission's report on its second session. Appreciation is also owed to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports on the Peacebuilding Fund. I also take this opportunity to welcome and extend my delegation's full support to the newly appointed Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Ms. Jane Holl Lute. Our appreciation also goes to the former Assistant Secretary-General, Ms. Carolyn McAskie, for her contribution to the cause of peacebuilding.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus. We would, however, like to elaborate on a few points.

The Peacebuilding Commission has come a long way in unifying the three main pillars of our Organization — peace and security, development and human rights — in a more integrated approach to peacebuilding. The Commission, as we are all aware, was established to address a lacuna in the United Nations structure: to reduce a post-conflict country's risk of relapsing into the quagmire of the self-perpetuating spiral of conflict and crisis. The founding resolution was aimed at addressing the special needs of countries emerging from conflicts. The Commission, in its second year, has made significant strides in its efforts to consolidate peace in the countries on its agenda: Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. We hope that it will be likewise for the new country on the agenda, the Central African Republic.

We are pleased that the methods of work of the Commission have been further consolidated during the second year of its operation. Given the complexity of its work and a demanding mandate, the Commission's

second session was very satisfactory. The formulation of country-specific Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies is considered to be the right approach. It has become an effective tool for peacebuilding strategies. We congratulate the respective Chairs of the country-specific configurations for their outstanding contributions to the Commission's work. The Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund can also claim their share of credit. We especially commend the countries of Sierra Leone, Burundi and Guinea-Bissau for their cooperation and for taking national ownership of Commission initiatives.

In enumerating the achievements of the past two years, one should not be complacent, as much remains to be done. My delegation is of the view that the operational relations of the Commission with the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, other intergovernmental United Nations bodies, the relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, national stakeholders, financiers and civil society should be further strengthened. The Organizational Committee should inject more dynamism into the peacebuilding architecture by playing a more decisive lead role. There should be greater coordination among all the peacebuilding initiatives at the country level.

A built-in system for stocktaking, in order for the Commission to build on its own peacebuilding achievements is necessary. In that respect, we welcome the establishment of a monitoring and tracking mechanism. It will be useful in monitoring the implementation of the framework and subsequently assessing its accountability and effectiveness. That will further allow the Commission to make necessary adjustments in its engagements. With the mechanism in place, the Commission, in our view, will be able to have the maximum impact on the ground.

The Working Group on Lessons Learned should devote some time to sharing the valuable experiences of the troop-contributing countries in peacekeeping. One of the key factors for the success of the Commission's work is the attention of the international community to its peacebuilding activities in the countries of engagement. The Commission and its work should therefore be given adequate visibility through outreach activities in order to retain that attention. We also welcome the Commission's decision to finance the field missions to the countries on its agenda.

My delegation is of the view that, in order to attain sustainable development, we should focus more on the issue of economic recovery in post-conflict societies. In order to further the work of the Commission, we believe that efforts should also be directed towards building pluralist political institutions; creating peace constituencies; restoring an environment of mutual trust, confidence and tolerance; and, ultimately, establishing a process of societal reconciliation and healing.

We can contribute to making peacebuilding initiatives more effective and more suited to realities on the ground through external material support. We emphasize ever-greater ownership of that process by the respective Governments of the countries on the agenda. National ownership, in our view, is a key to sustaining progress. Post-conflict societies must take charge of their own destiny. We have seen how home-grown ideas, such as microcredit and women's non-formal education, can work miracles in economic recovery and women's empowerment. The Commission should include that as an integral element in its strategies.

The Peacebuilding Fund has a critical role to play. We are heartened by the fact that the Fund has exceeded the target of $250 million. That is testimony to the continued commitment of the international community to the goal of peacebuilding.

We feel that members of the Commission should be more frequently updated on the operations of the Peacebuilding Fund and provided with information on disbursements with adequate lead time. The relationship between the Commission and the Fund and their individual roles have to be made clear to the stakeholders on the ground in order to dispel confusion as regards eligibility for Peacebuilding Fund support.

It is indeed a shared moral obligation to be vigilant about the special needs of countries emerging from conflict and making steps towards recovery, reintegration and reconstruction. It is crucial to fully integrate the economic recovery and development dimension in the process of peacebuilding. As more countries are brought under its consideration, the work of the Commission has rapidly expanded. To cope with the increasing workload, the Commission and its supporting bodies will require more political and material support.

Bangladesh, as one of the largest troop-contributing countries, is actively engaged in United Nations peacekeeping operations. We are equally happy to be associated with the Commission as a member. We will remain closely associated with its work in the future, and it is our combined responsibility to see to it that the Commission can fully function as a competent intergovernmental advisory body addressing post-conflict situations and as the spearhead for a coordinated, coherent and integrated peacebuilding architecture. The international community should come forward to assist the Commission in fulfilling its mandate.

Mr. Sen (India): We appreciate the scheduling of this timely joint debate on the second report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/63/92) and the Secretary-General's report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218).

Let me begin by congratulating Japan on its work as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, in a tenure that has lasted somewhat longer than might have been expected at the outset. I also express our appreciation for the Chairs of the Commission's country-specific configurations and the Working Group on Lessons Learned. I must make special mention of the delegation of Norway, the former Permanent Representative of which chaired the configuration on Burundi with commitment. Let me also welcome the new Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Ms. Jane Holl Lute, and assure her of India's continued constructive support.

I also associate my delegation with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica, who spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). We appreciate Jamaica's work in coordinating the NAM caucus within the Peacebuilding Commission.

I have only a few additional points to add in the context of the reports of the Peacebuilding Commission and on the Peacebuilding Fund. Our comments are based both on our abiding commitment to the objectives of the Peacebuilding Commission and on our conviction that useful lessons may be drawn from our collective experience over the period that both bodies have been in existence.

First, we need to guard ourselves against either excessive pessimism or premature celebrations regarding the relevance or efficacy of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund thus far. On the positive side, the fact that we now have four countries on the agenda of the Commission, all at their request, is undoubtedly a good sign. The finalization of Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies for three of those countries and the review of two of those Strategies are all signs of progress. It is no exaggeration to say that the Peacebuilding Commission has indeed become an established player in the United Nations context.

However, while the steady consolidation of a role for the Peacebuilding Commission within the lexicon of the international system is a good outcome, it is not a sufficient achievement of itself for all of us to take pride in. We need to continue to make the Commission relevant to the countries that it seeks to assist by moving decisively towards a pragmatic, circumstance-specific approach. For too long we in the Commission have spent time in debates that veer between prescriptive solutions and a conditionality-based approach to inflexible positions. As long as we have our positions predetermined before we objectively examine the situation in a country seeking assistance, we will not be able to provide truly dispassionate and situation-specific advice. That is also one reason why we appear collectively unable to genuinely listen to what post-conflict countries actually want when they seek the Peacebuilding Commission's assistance.

Secondly, to ensure that the advice that is provided by the Peacebuilding Commission is relevant and useful, we must focus on two aspects. The first is to continue to expand our access to focused, specific and objective information from the ground. Here the Peacebuilding Support Office must play an important role, for without a clear and unbiased channel for inputs from the ground, listing key challenges and mapping gaps in the availability of resources to meet such challenges, the Commission cannot provide effective advice. Moreover, since there will inevitably be a disparity in information flow between those members that have representation on the ground and those that do not, that disparity could well prejudice the discourse within the Peacebuilding Commission, to no one's benefit.

The second aspect is the need for effective two-way dialogue between countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Commission itself. Such dialogue will be most meaningful if we can make the transition to ensuring that the Commission's advice

is based on a light-touch approach. By that I mean that the Commission should not take on the task of advising States on post-conflict consolidation. Instead, it should help the State concerned to identify and utilize genuine international expertise in addressing such sensitive issues.

The lightness of the Peacebuilding Commission's touch also relates to the question of national ownership, which all of us endorse as a core principle of the Commission's involvement. That relates to the need to strengthen a representative and effective Government in the country concerned. Eventually, it is the Government of the country that is answerable if it is unable to deliver on peace consolidation strategies, and that answer must be given to the people it represents.

It is also the Government of the country that will need to manage processes beyond the country's engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission. It follows logically therefore that our primary focus must be on enhancing the legitimacy, effectiveness and absorptive capacity of the country's administrative and governing system. Without that, we will never have the tools in place for our own efforts to assist in post-conflict peacebuilding.

That is also the case for the Peacebuilding Support Office. While there has been a welcome effort made to include the Support Office on the ground in the countries where the Commission has an involvement, much more needs to be done. To begin with, the capacity of the Support Office needs to be expanded, but that must also be matched within the United Nations system by a willingness to genuinely include the Office, rather than to zealously guard turf.

Thirdly — and this point is a related one — we need to make greater efforts to energize the coordination aspect of the Peacebuilding Commission's mandated role. Currently, neither the Commission nor the Support Office within the United Nations has been able to leverage their unique and cross-cutting positions to perform that task. To those who argue that the Commission is not as yet ready for it, the counter-argument is that, unless it is given that task, it can never be ready to coordinate international efforts. Furthermore, it also begs the question as to why major donor organizations are sought after to be part of the Peacebuilding Commission if not to enhance its coordination role.

Fourthly, while we have certainly done better in this past year in focusing attention and assisting in the marshalling of resources, much more can and must be done. Advice alone will not consolidate peace; certainly not if it isn't matched with either material or policy assistance. Mobilization of resources is the key vehicle by which post-conflict societies can set course upon the road to peace consolidation and development.

As a contributor to the Peacebuilding Fund, and as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission's Organizational Committee, we welcomed the operationalization of the Fund, just as we welcome the idea of a renewed resource-mobilization drive towards the end of this year. We also welcome the improved synergy between the Commission and the Fund, although much more needs to be done to ensure that the objectives of the Commission's policy advice and the actual disbursement of funds to the State concerned are actually in consonance. There remains a troubling lag between the two that needs to be dealt with when we consider a new mandate for the Fund. Unless the disbursement of funds improves, and unless the strategic link between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund is better, neither body will achieve its full potential.

In that context, I must underline that we remain unconvinced that the three-window structure of drawing upon the Peacebuilding Fund, in particular, window II, has been particularly useful to either the Fund or the Commission. Even the report on the Peacebuilding Fund appears to suggest, in paragraph 33, that the proactive strategy of identifying additional countries eligible for support for funds involved selection of countries receiving high-level visits from the United Nations, those that approached the Secretariat directly, and, in one case that we know, a country that did not approach the Secretariat, but was given funds in order to prolong the Organization's role there.

That can hardly be called effective criteria for funding the Peacebuilding Fund. Indeed, since the entire process of window II consideration takes place without inputs from either the Member States or the Commission, it is hard to know what criteria actually apply. In fact, window II does not rise to the level of even window-dressing.

There is also a potential problem of the blurring of monitoring lines, if a State begins to receive

assistance under Peacebuilding Fund window II, before eventually coming on to the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda. Those and several other issues need to be resolved during the discussions on the Fund.

I would also like to reiterate, in the context of the better utilization of Peacebuilding Fund allocations, the point I made earlier about enhancing the mandate and the capacity of the Peacebuilding Support Office. Without that, we will always be in a less than satisfactory position regarding the utilization of money allocated under the Fund. It is not enough to ascribe that problem to the weak absorptive capacity in the country concerned. It is precisely because absorptive and administrative capacities are weak that assistance has been sought. Therefore we need to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund work together with the Peacebuilding Support Office here in New York to provide clear instructions. There must also be a dedicated unit on the ground dealing with projects funded by the Peacebuilding Fund.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the mechanism of peacebuilding is integrally related to the larger question of a collective approach. If we continue to segregate ourselves, not only within the Peacebuilding Commission, but also among the Commission, the Support Office and the Fund and between all three and the rest of the United Nations system, we will fail to provide a coherent and coordinate response to those who look to the United Nations to make a difference. That should not happen. I reaffirm India's commitment to doing whatever is in our power to ensure that that is never the case.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes this opportunity to consider the report submitted by the Peacebuilding Commission (A/63/92) at the conclusion of its second session, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/180.

We thank the Chairman of the Commission, Ambassador Takasu of Japan, and the Vice-Chairs, Ambassador Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador and Ambassador Christian of Ghana, for their work. We also commend the tireless efforts of Ambassador Løvald of Norway, Ambassador Majoor of the Netherlands and Ambassador Viotti of Brazil, and the Chairs of the country-specific configurations for Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, respectively. In addition, we take this opportunity to express our support for Ambassador Grauls of Belgium, who recently began his work as Chair of the country-specific configuration for the Central African Republic. Furthermore, my delegation recognizes the fruitful efforts of Ms. Carolyn McAskie as head of the Peacebuilding Support Office and welcomes Ms. Jane Holl Lute, new head of the Office.

Two years after the work of the Peacebuilding Commission began, the new body resulting from the 2005 United Nations reform has made progress in attaining its objectives. During the period under review, we have noted that, through its country-specific configurations, the Commission has definitely — albeit not without difficulty — helped to strengthen the national institutions of Burundi and Sierra Leone. At the same time, it has included new countries in its agenda, such as Guinea-Bissau and, more recently, the Central African Republic.

We are pleased to observe that, during its second session, in keeping with the principles of its mandate, the Commission has redoubled its efforts to improve its focus and its working methods. The establishment of comprehensive peacebuilding strategies and follow-up mechanisms for Burundi and Sierra Leone is one example; others are the Commission's ability to draw on lessons learned and its flexibility in adapting them to new national specificities. It did so in the case of Guinea-Bissau, whose country-specific configuration, to which Mexico belongs, adopted its Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding on 1 October.

We commend the Commission for all of that. We hope that the experiences gained and lessons learned will form the basis for continued improvement in the system-wide coherence of the United Nations system through coordinated and comprehensive action, strengthening the link between security, development and human rights as essential components of sustainable peace. That will help the dividends of peace to reach the populations of the countries on the Commission's agenda as quickly as possible, which in turn is a prerequisite for sustaining any peace and development process over the short, medium and long terms.

We hope that the Commission will continue to maintain its flexible and inclusive character and to carry out its transparent and integrative work. In that connection, we support the more frequent holding of informal plenary meetings, such as that held on

29 January 2008. My delegation believes that such meetings permit a flow of information and promote interaction among organs, in addition to arousing greater interest by the membership in the substantive work of the Commission and in possibly participating to support the countries on its agenda.

The Strategic Frameworks are the key and the basis for ensuring that the Commission can carry out its work of coordination with respect to the international community's support for the countries concerned. National ownership, mutual accountability and ongoing commitment are decisive aspects in formulating the Strategic Frameworks, which, my delegation believes, should also be seen as State commitments to the United Nations peace architecture and should outlast current administrations. It is only in that way that the attainment of medium- and long-term peace and development objectives can be assured.

With regard to the acquisition of resources, my delegation agrees with the view expressed in the report before us. It is extremely important that the Commission continue to develop innovative methods for mobilizing national and international resources. In practice, some members of the Commission have increased their participation regarding the countries on its agenda. Other members have even become donors of financial and technical assistance, contributing to national capacity-building. That practice should continue to be promoted, and my country reaffirms its firm commitment in that regard.

Mexico is grateful for the Secretary-General's report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218), which enables Member States to carry out the mandate to provide normative guidance on the use of resources. The increase in the donor list and the fact that we have exceeded funding expectations are tangible proof of the commitment and confidence of the membership with regard to the Fund. However, my delegation reaffirms the need to make financial contributions to the Fund predictable so that it can respond more swiftly to the many requests of post-conflict countries meeting the requirements for its support.

My delegation welcomes the transparency exercise carried out by the Peacebuilding Support Office by holding periodic informal meetings to inform donors about the financial situation and performance of the Fund. Nevertheless, we must continue to work to improve its functioning and adopt appropriate methods that will enable us to clearly and precisely assess contributions to the Fund in the various aspects of the peacebuilding agenda. We believe that the launching of its mandate review will be an ideal opportunity to undertake that task.

Finally, it is in a spirit of confidence and cooperation that Mexico has decided to renew its voluntary contribution to the Peacebuilding Fund this year. We reaffirm once again our commitment to the United Nations architecture mandated to promote and strengthen peacebuilding processes.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Let me join others in expressing gratitude to the President for convening this important debate on the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its second session (A/63/92). South Africa aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

South Africa welcomes the second report of the Peacebuilding Commission. The report provides a detailed account of the work and activities of the Commission during the second year of its operation and is a result of serious consultations among members of the Commission. We also wish to thank the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission Organizational Committee, His Excellency Ambassador Yukio Takasu, Permanent Representative of Japan, for his sterling work. We are grateful too for the significant contribution made by the Chairpersons of the country-specific configurations on Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic, as well as by the Chairperson of the Working Group on Lessons Learned. My delegation also welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218).

South Africa applauds the accomplishments of the Peacebuilding Commission during its second session, particularly the important strides towards implementing its mandate and core functions. We believe that a strong Commission is crucial for addressing challenges associated with conflict, instability and underdevelopment. A successful Commission is important in preventing post-conflict countries from relapsing into conflict.

The annual report highlights the progress made and challenges faced by the Commission at its previous session. Among the successes have been the Commission's continued efforts aimed at strengthening

its relationship and cooperation with relevant organs and institutions, including the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council.

At the same time, my delegation underlines the importance of strengthened cooperation between the Peacebuilding Commission and relevant regional and subregional organizations. It is in this context that the African Union continues to play its role in the peacebuilding field, including through its Policy Framework for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development, which places emphasis on addressing the root causes of conflict.

We are pleased that, as reflected in the Commission's report, the Organizational Committee held an interactive dialogue with the Chairperson of the African Union Peace and Security Council and received a briefing from Joaquim Chissano, the former President of Mozambique, during the reporting period. We look forward to further interactions of this nature, as they are crucial in strengthening and promoting cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union.

My delegation also commends the establishment of regular contacts between the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council on issues relating to the work of the Commission. In that context, we reaffirm our continued support for the strengthening of those relationships.

Now that the United Nations peacebuilding architecture is in place, the challenge is how to consolidate the achievements made thus far. South Africa firmly believes that the Peacebuilding Commission should continue to be driven by Member States. The Organizational Committee must continue to be the focal point of all Commission activities and decisions, and its central role should be strengthened.

National ownership of the peacebuilding process remains fundamental in assisting post-conflict countries to rebuild their institutions and sustain peace and development. To that end, we commend the Governments of the countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission for their active role in efforts to rebuild their respective countries.

My delegation welcomes the report's acknowledgement of the importance of official development assistance, trade and investment in post-conflict countries. We hope that the Commission will continue to develop methods for mobilizing international and domestic resources. At the same time, quick-impact projects and sufficient injection of predictable resources in countries emerging from conflict are crucial to ensuring stability and development on the ground.

In conclusion, as we gradually build up the experience of the Peacebuilding Commission, we need to put more emphasis on the nexus between peace and development. In that regard, we support a greater and stronger focus on the development agenda of the countries on the agenda of the Commission.

Finally, South Africa remains committed to the cause of the Peacebuilding Commission. We will continue to work with others towards ensuring that post-conflict countries do not relapse into conflict and towards maximizing the Commission's impact on the ground, in full alignment, cooperation and accord with national Government policies and strategies.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/63/PV.24

General Assembly
Sixty-third session

Official Records

24th plenary meeting
Monday, 13 October 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann. . . . . (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 122

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/472)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, may I take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before the Assembly today?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in that Committee and are reflected in that relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that when the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once. That is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee. May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations: requests under Article 19 of the Charter", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/4).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 122.

Agenda items 67 and 68

Report of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Note by the Secretary-General (A/63/209)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

08-54686 (E)

Report of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Note by the Secretary-General (A/63/210)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to take note of the thirteenth annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (A/63/209)?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to take note of the fifteenth annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (A/63/210)?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on Mr. Dennis Byron, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

Mr. Byron: I am greatly honoured to address the members of the General Assembly. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my most sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of this Assembly and to wish you a successful and fulfilling tour of duty.

I wish, with the greatest respect, to invite the Assembly to take a special interest in the Tribunal, as timely action by the General Assembly is pivotal to the completion of its mandate within the projected time frames.

Approximately 14 years ago, the international community responded to the serious violations of international humanitarian law committed throughout Rwanda, which resulted in the killings of more than 800,000 people and in other acts of violence, by establishing the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

The Tribunal's mandate has been to contribute to the process of national reconciliation and to the restoration and maintenance of peace in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region, as well as to ensure that violations of international humanitarian law are halted and effectively redressed.

I have found it remarkable that this political institution considered that the attainment of such a political objective could best be achieved through a judicial process. I am sure that there were those who had questions and doubts about the ability of a judicial institution to address such an objective.

But, today, whatever system is employed to measure the success of the venture, there can be no doubt that peace has been restored and maintained in Rwanda, that there is a credible and ongoing process of national reconciliation, that many of the violations have been addressed and that some have been effectively redressed.

Of course, work remains to be done and circumstances have given the Tribunal new tasks. But there can be no doubt that the Tribunal has been a central and stabilizing instrument that has made major and lasting contributions to the establishment of international justice, peace and reconciliation, which currently prevail in the region.

Among the most basic and important of the Tribunal's achievements has been the accumulation of an indisputable historical record, including testimonies of witnesses, testimonies of victims, testimonies of accused, documentary evidence, and video and audio recordings. That record was invaluable to the Appeals Chamber when it discredited and rejected the theory that genocide and widespread or systematic attacks against civilian populations had not actually occurred in Rwanda in 1994.

In a nutshell, the Tribunal has established an important, judicially verified factual record of those atrocities. The importance and value of that record and the archival collections of the Tribunal to national, regional and international history should not be underestimated. They have contributed and will continue to contribute to the peace and reconciliation process in Rwanda and in the Great Lakes region, and they offer a guide for addressing similar violations of international humanitarian law in other areas of the world.

The Tribunal and its twin sister, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), have been the modern pioneers of a credible international criminal justice system. They have contributed greatly to the development of substantive international criminal law and procedure. The 14 years of our activity have produced a substantial body of jurisprudence, including the definitions of the elements of the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and

war crimes, as well as of forms of responsibility, such as superior responsibility. Other international tribunals and courts will have a well-established foundation on which to build. The work of the Tribunal has transformed the resolutions, treaties and conventions emanating from the United Nations into practical and effective tools to be used by the international criminal justice system in its efforts to end mass atrocities.

The Tribunal has also fostered national compliance with international obligations in the human rights sphere. For example, Rwanda has already abolished the death penalty in order to facilitate the transfer of cases to its jurisdiction. The Trial Chamber's decision not to transfer the Munyakazi case to Rwanda was recently upheld by the Appeals Chamber. The reasons given in the appellate judgement could lead to even further reforms, including a clarification of the applicable punishment for those transferred to Rwanda, the exclusion of life imprisonment in solitary confinement and strengthening the witness protection programme.

The referral proceedings have also put the spotlight on other countries that need to adopt domestic legislation implementing the human rights treaties and conventions to which they are parties. The Tribunal's influence, therefore, extends well beyond the Great Lakes region, spreading what are arguably the highest ideals of this body — its international standards of human rights — and transforming them from noble aspirations into enforceable legislation and impartial judicial processes.

I am honoured to present to the General Assembly today the Tribunal's thirteenth annual report, which outlines the Tribunal's activities from July 2007 to June 2008 and reflects those remarkable and ongoing achievements and the Tribunal's unwavering commitment to its mandate. During the reporting period, all sections of the Tribunal worked vigorously, combining their efforts to complete their tasks at the earliest possible date while upholding due process and guaranteeing the right to a fair trial for all those who are accused.

Since July 2007, the Trial Chambers have issued more than 400 interlocutory and pretrial decisions. They rendered judgements and sentences involving four accused. Decisions were delivered in five applications for referral of cases to national jurisdictions. Two were successfully referred, while in three cases the referral was denied. The evidence phase of trials involving seven accused has been completed. Currently, there are 13 accused awaiting judgement. Trials involving 15 accused are in progress. The cases of four detainees, including one case of contempt, are at the pretrial stage. One accused who has been recently transferred to the Tribunal made his initial appearance last week, pleading not guilty on all charges against him. And there is one individual awaiting retrial as ordered by the Appeals Chamber this past August in its Muvunyi judgement.

These figures show that by December 2009 the Trial Chambers will be required to deliver judgements against 34 accused persons. In addition, as a result of the recent Appeals Chamber decision upholding the denial of transferring the case of Munyakazi to Rwanda, that case, along with the cases of Kanyarukiga, Hategekimana and Gatete, may now have to be added to the Tribunal's workload, making the total for adjudication 38 cases.

The Appeals Chamber has also continued to function effectively. It has delivered more than 80 interlocutory decisions and pretrial orders and decisions as well as judgements concerning three individuals. That brings the number of persons who have had their appeals completed to a total of 25. As a result, only one appeal is pending. But I think that the Assembly should take note that the appellate workload is likely to increase dramatically in the near future and that the capacity of the Appeals Chamber may need to be enhanced to cope with it.

During the reporting period, Prosecutor Hassan Jallow and his staff were at full stretch, investigating and developing evidence for cases not yet in trial, presenting evidence in the cases before the Trial Chambers and dealing with matters before the Appeals Chamber. Prosecutor Jallow has continued to devote special efforts to securing the arrest of the remaining fugitives, two of whom were arrested during the reporting period. His Office continued to work to find countries willing to receive cases for referral to national jurisdictions. It has been providing assistance in the two cases that have been successfully transferred. Two additional referrals are now pending before the Appeals Chamber, and two others are pending before Trial Chambers. The Office of the Prosecutor has compiled a significant database of evidentiary material and is continuously assisting national jurisdictions in their investigations.

During the present reporting period, the Registry, headed by Mr. Adama Dieng, has continued to play a vital role by providing administrative and legal support to all the Tribunal's trials. In my last report, I explained that the Tribunal was experiencing difficulty due to the inability to offer long-term appointments, which has contributed to the current high staff turnover. The Registry continues its efforts to retain the competent, knowledgeable and experienced staff members required for the successful completion of the Tribunal's mandate. To cushion the impact of the Tribunal's drawdown plan and address the exceptional situation that comes with it, the Tribunal has engaged the support of the Department of Management, especially the Offices of the Comptroller and of Human Resources Management, to explore and adopt flexible, exceptional measures and a common strategy to address the challenges of downsizing and ensure that the Tribunal completes its work within the set time frames. However, more needs to be done in order to address the issue of staff retention, and we will continue to count on the Assembly's support.

During the reporting period, the Office of the Registrar has also continued to deploy vigorous and commendable diplomatic efforts in the relocation of acquitted persons. As a result of — and thanks to — the cooperation of Member States, one acquitted person has been relocated. Now only one acquitted person awaits relocation, and efforts are ongoing to find a suitable resolution.

Establishing peace, justice, security and reconciliation in the region remains a central activity of the Tribunal. As a key component of its mandate, the Tribunal provides support in Rwanda to the judiciary, to civil society and to academic institutions through its comprehensive capacity-building and outreach programmes. The Registry in particular has continued to promote the Tribunal's work by carrying out a diverse range of public relations activities, including training sessions and the production of documentaries and other publications, notably in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region.

The Tribunal has worked assiduously in compliance with the completion strategy. The task has been daunting, yet we have tackled the challenge with confidence and determination. However, there have been developments that added to the workload on which the time estimates were initially based. Because of the recent arrests of the three fugitives who have to be tried at the Tribunal, we are now planning trials for which provision had not previously been made. I would like to take this opportunity to call again on Member States to take more active steps in apprehending the remaining fugitives, because the value of our achievements will be diminished unless all those arrests are secured. The inevitable result of those additional undertakings is the need for additional time to complete the proceedings.

At the request of the Tribunal, following its presentation of evidence on the progress of its work and projections, the Security Council extended the terms of office of some judges in July 2008. The Assembly will have to decide on the proposed additional resources in support of the revised judicial workload.

The Tribunal has set for itself a very high standard of performance. The workload for which we are planning is far higher than at any other time in its history. If one uses the number of judgements delivered as a measurement standard, then within the next 14 months the Tribunal will produce a quantum of work almost equivalent to, and maybe exceeding, the quantum of work produced over the previous 14 years. Since 1998, 31 trial judgements involving 37 accused have been rendered. We are now planning to deliver judgements in respect of 34 accused in the next 14 months. The Tribunal must now consider adding to its workload one case the referral of which has not been successful, and potentially three other cases the requests for referral of which are pending before the Appeals Chamber, which concern the same national jurisdiction.

It is true that many of those judgements will be delivered after trials that have taken several years to complete. But the upcoming challenge for the judges and support staff is that the multi-track system devised to expedite the process requires that trial and judgement writing activities in every Trial Chamber overlap during the coming period. That is no easy task.

A workload of such magnitude over a short period will require the continued service of a staff whose experience, competence and dedication were essential to the achievements of which the Tribunal boasts. Unfortunately, our very success in moving towards the timely completion of our tasks leads to the lack of staff whose services are indispensable to continued progress. Unless we can provide our staff

with reasonable expectations of secure employment, we will deprive ourselves of the means to achieve the goals and the timetable to which we are committed.

For some time, the Tribunal has been discussing the importance of devising strategies for staff retention with this Assembly. Now the situation is even more critical than before. A continued loss of staff will make the task insurmountable. When it became apparent that there would be no financial incentives for staff retention, the Tribunal adopted a number of alternate strategies. But at present, the most important requirement for the retention of staff is predictability of employment until the completion of our work, and that is within the power of this Assembly to guarantee.

We have applied for a supplementary budget to retain the staff required for the trials planned for 2009. Rapid adoption of the supplementary budget will provide the required predictability for our staff members and allow the Tribunal to move effectively and expeditiously towards a successful implementation of its completion strategy. Without that approval, comprehensive and efficient planning will be impossible.

I should point out that the need for a supplementary budget does not reflect any inefficiency on the part of the Tribunal. It reflects, rather, the fact that this Tribunal, and others like it, are in many ways unprecedented in the history of international jurisprudence. While it was obvious at the outset that funding would have to be provided for its operation, it may not have been so obvious that any Tribunal designed to exist for a limited time would require budgetary adjustments as it approached the conclusion of its mandate. I stand before the Assembly to reiterate that the Tribunal remains committed to its important mandate to bring to justice those most responsible for the mass atrocity in Rwanda during 1994, to restore peace to the Great Lakes region and to facilitate reconciliation between the former combatants.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to recall that the Tribunal is actively preparing for the period after the completion of its current trial work. Discussions and exchanges of views are under way with the Office of Legal Affairs and other stakeholders to determine the residual functions needed to preserve the Tribunal's legacy, including such important issues as the enforcement of sentences, the protection of witnesses and the maintenance of archives in which so much history is reposed.

I would now like to thank the General Assembly for its unfailing support to the Tribunal, which is paramount to the successful accomplishment of our vital mission. Approximately 14 years ago the international community determined that international justice was an essential component of reconciliation and peace. We think the Member States were right. We must ensure that the next generations will never forget our accomplishments and will pursue the fight against impunity of those who commit the most serious international crimes.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

I now call on Mr. Fausto Pocar, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Mr. Pocar (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, upon your election as President of the General Assembly. It is a great honour for me to take the floor under your presidency for the third time as President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and to present the fifteenth annual report of the Tribunal (see A/63/210). I would like to take this opportunity to convey my warmest gratitude to the members of the Assembly for their support of the Tribunal over the years, which is essential to enable the Tribunal to complete its work.

(*spoke in French*)

In my address today, I would like to outline the Tribunal's remarkable work and to highlight the significance of its legacy for the future of international criminal justice. Since 2004, the effectiveness of the Tribunal has been measured primarily by the yardstick of the targets established in the framework of the completion strategy endorsed by the Security Council in resolutions 1503 (2003) and 1534 (2004). However, the completion of the cases on our docket is only part of our mission. Our main goal is to ensure that the pioneering role and substantial accomplishments of the Tribunal will continue to inspire future generations in their fight for justice. In other words, the fight against impunity must remain a priority for the international community, and towards that end the international community must continue to support judges, prosecutors and human rights defenders, in particular in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, in order to

strengthen the rule of law by bringing to justice those responsible for international crimes.

The Tribunal has been a resounding success in many respects. It has brought charges against 161 individuals and completed proceedings against 116 of them. It has created nearly two thirds of the entire body of international case law dealing with violations of international humanitarian law. It has continuously strived to improve its procedures and working methods and has achieved unparalleled productivity. It has contributed to the exceptional development and unprecedented strengthening of international criminal and humanitarian law. And more importantly, it has brought justice to victims, helped build peace and promoted reconciliation by supporting judicial institutions responsible for pursuing and trying war criminals in the former Yugoslavia.

However, in order to preserve the Tribunal's achievements and to enable it to fulfil its mission, the international community must keep up its support in several areas. First, the Tribunal must be provided with all necessary means to complete its proceedings fairly and expeditiously. Secondly, the remaining fugitives must be arrested, and thirdly, more substantial assistance must be provided to our partners in the former Yugoslavia.

With regard, first, to the completion of trials, over the past year we have greatly improved efficiency and made unprecedented progress. At present, of the 43 remaining accused individuals — excluding the 2 who are still fugitives — 22 are currently on trial, 6 are awaiting judgement, 10 are on appeal, and only 5 — including 4 who were recently arrested — are awaiting their trials, which will begin shortly.

During the reporting period, the Trial Chambers rendered 213 decisions on pretrial matters in 8 cases, delivered 5 judgements and heard 5 contempt cases. Since October 2007, the Appeals Chamber has rendered 169 decisions comprising 10 appeals from judgements, 43 interlocutory appeals, 90 pre-appeal decisions and 26 review, reconsideration or other decisions.

Those results are the fruit of our steady efforts to identify new concrete measures that would enable us to streamline our work. For that purpose, in April I decided to reconstitute the working groups tasked with speeding up trials and appeals.

The Trial Chambers have been able to conduct simultaneous proceedings in eight cases, thanks to the very effective management of three courtrooms, with all of the empty time slots being used, but also thanks to the appointment of ad litem judges to two or even three cases under way.

As I have already underscored, the contribution made by the ad litem judges remains essential for the Tribunal to complete the cases. To that end, I took the initiative of recommending to the Security Council that it adopt a resolution authorizing the appointment of additional ad litem judges, who already number more than the limit set by the statute, which is 12. Resolution 1800 (2008), which was adopted in February, allowed us to appoint two additional ad litem judges and commence two new trials.

I also wish to draw the attention of the Assembly today to two other issues that are critical to the completion of the cases on our docket. The first, which I addressed before the General Assembly last year, concerns the pension entitlements of permanent judges. I wish to point out that the conclusions of a study conducted by an independent consulting firm, which were endorsed by the Secretariat, confirm our claim that the disparity between the pension benefits of judges of the Tribunal and those of judges of the International Court of Justice is discriminatory and clearly contrary to the Tribunal's Statute. It is imperative that that issue, which will have direct consequences for the completion of the trials, be swiftly resolved.

Thus, we need the Assembly's unwavering support at this stage. There is no doubt that, if the Tribunal's judges do not receive the same benefits as the Court's judges, some of them will be obliged to resign in order to return their countries' jurisdictions and secure their pension entitlements. We would then lose the valuable contributions of experienced judges at a critical time in the Tribunal's mandate, when our objectives demand maximum efficiency. I therefore urge the General Assembly to address this matter as soon as possible by adopting the recommendations set out in the consulting firm's study and those of the Secretary-General.

Another issue that has arisen is the retention of highly qualified staff. As the Tribunal's work nears completion, staff members will have to seek new career opportunities, and many are already doing so. We must ensure that our staff members, who have dedicated many years of service to the institution, benefit from

training and career counselling and that measures are adopted to enhance their career prospects as the Tribunal completes its work. Such measures are essential so that we can manage departures of staff and retain key personnel without whom the Tribunal will not be able to complete its work on time.

(*spoke in English*)

Let me now turn to the second point for which Member State support is essential: the arrest of the remaining fugitives. As Members are well aware, positive developments have taken place during the reporting period. The arrests of Stojan Župljanin and Radovan Karadžić were particularly important milestones, and we commend the Government of Serbia for the critical cooperation it provided in that respect. However, we cannot successfully accomplish our work if the last two remaining fugitives, Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić, are not arrested immediately. I must emphasize once again that, while the Tribunal has done its utmost to expeditiously conduct and complete its cases, the late arrests of fugitives — for which the international community must take responsibility — will inevitably lead to slippages in the scheduled end of our proceedings. Thus, while we are ensuring that the trials of the four recently arrested accused will all start in 2009, the arrests of the remaining fugitives might oblige us to push back even further our target dates for the completion of all trials.

I also wish to reiterate that the obligation of all States Members of the United Nations to cooperate with the Tribunal, pursuant to article 29 of the Statute, is not limited to the arrest of fugitives. That obligation is, in fact, much wider and also entails the provision of assistance in all aspects of the ongoing proceedings before the Tribunal, including access to archives, the production of documents and access to and the protection of witnesses. I must note, in that respect, disturbing incidents of witness interference that have occurred during the reporting period, as well as delays in the service of documents, which have affected the expeditious conduct of our proceedings.

Finally, State cooperation also entails cooperation in the relocation of witnesses and the enforcement of the Tribunal's sentences. While the Registry has managed to finalize seven agreements on the enforcement of sentences, further support from States is required with respect to the relocation of witnesses.

The third and final point that I would like to raise with members today is, to my mind, equally important. It concerns the legacy that we will leave for international and domestic courts in the conduct of complex criminal cases dealing with serious violations of international humanitarian law and, in particular, the continuation of our mission by judicial institutions in the former Yugoslavia.

Allow me to recall, in that respect, that the Tribunal was never intended to serve indefinitely as a substitute for national courts, in particular in the region of the former Yugoslavia. Those domestic courts have an essential role to play in ensuring that justice is served and in promoting reconciliation. Thus, our strategy for the future must not only include the completion of the cases on our docket; as I said earlier, we must also strive to secure the continuation by local actors of our mission to fight impunity. In other words, we will satisfactorily fulfil our mandate only if domestic judicial institutions are ready to take on the task that we will leave behind.

That strategy also makes sense in the context of a more prosaic, cost-benefit analysis: a failure to adequately support domestic rule-of-law institutions will, in effect, diminish the impact of Member States' significant financial investments in international justice made through their contributions to the Tribunal budget. The capital invested thus far will not yield the expected return if the international community does not continue to support our legacy projects.

As detailed in my report, during the reporting period we have taken and supported multiple initiatives to strengthen our partnership with domestic judicial institutions and to establish close communication channels with our interlocutors in the region. Following the amendments in July 2007 and February 2008 of rule 75 (H) of the Tribunal's Rules of Procedure and Evidence — which allows parties, judges, victims and witnesses to directly petition the Tribunal for variation of protective measures ordered by the Tribunal — we have handled a large number of applications from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. To ensure expeditious processing, I established a special bench to deal with some of those applications.

In previous reports, I have emphasized the Tribunal's referral of the cases of 13 mid- to low-level accused to domestic jurisdictions in the region, pursuant to rule 11 bis of our Rules of Procedure and

Evidence. The referral procedure has been very successful so far, and the trials of the individuals who have been transferred are being closely monitored by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on behalf of the Office of the Prosecutor.

However, one must not forget that, in addition to the cases referred by the Tribunal, thousands of war crimes cases are currently pending or being investigated by domestic judicial institutions. Therefore, the continuing support of the international community for domestic institutions remains absolutely essential to guaranteeing the lasting establishment of the rule of law.

Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

On the occasion of my visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina in May, I saw for myself the extent of the task that remains to be achieved. Cooperation between States of the region in the investigation and prosecution of alleged war criminals, such as the extradition of nationals who are alleged war criminals to another jurisdiction, remains problematic. In addition, there are still dire needs with respect to the security of detention facilities, in particular in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That was unfortunately highlighted by the escape from prison of Radovan Stankovic, whose case was referred by the Tribunal to Bosnia and Herzegovina under rule 11 bis. The escape happened less than two months after Stankovic was convicted of systematic rape, torture and enslavement of women and underage girls and sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment. The fact that, a year and a half later, he has not yet been apprehended is regrettable.

The lack of progress made by the relevant authorities in apprehending Stankovic and in prosecuting those who assisted his escape at all levels has been a cause of serious concern for the Tribunal. We cannot afford to let the valiant efforts of domestic judiciaries to strengthen the rule of law be tarnished by the inaction of Governments and local authorities. It is thus essential that the international community continue to press those authorities to address that failure.

In that regard as well, I must take this opportunity to raise the issue of the presence of international staff in the State Court and Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina. During my visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina, various actors voiced concern about the impending departure of that staff, given that their mandate is due to terminate at the end of 2009. Victims' groups, for instance, have indicated that it will have a detrimental impact on the willingness of witnesses to testify. I therefore urge the international community to support an extension of the mandates of the international members of the State Court and Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We have also initiated two joint projects to ensure the preservation of the Tribunal's legacy. One project, which should be completed before the end of the year, was undertaken with the assistance of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and consists of compiling a manual of the Tribunal's best practices, which will be of great value to other international and domestic jurisdictions involved in the prosecution of war crimes cases.

Another project, launched in partnership with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, involves assessing the impact of capacity-building efforts and identifying what remains to be done to ensure that local judiciaries have the capacity to continue the work of the Tribunal long after it completes its mandate.

Let me, finally, touch briefly on the ongoing discussions on residual mechanisms. As I previously reported, we submitted our final report on residual mechanisms in September 2007. Since then, we have met with the Security Council Working Group on the ad hoc Tribunals and provided several clarifications in response to the questions of Working Group members. We also welcomed members of the Working Group to the Tribunal on 1 and 2 October. That visit gave members the opportunity to meet our judges and senior staff and gain a more practical understanding of our work, which I am sure will prove helpful when determining the features of the Tribunal's residual mechanisms.

With respect to the specific question of the Tribunal's archives, we just received a report from the Advisory Committee on Archives set up by the Registrars of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, which will soon be considered by the Tribunal with a view to submitting its recommendations on that question. I must, in that regard, take the opportunity to emphasize that, irrespective of the political decision on the physi l location of the Tribunal's archives, it is of critical

importance that open access to the archives be guaranteed. For that purpose, a suggested approach would be the creation of memorial centres in the main cities of the region, offering access to archives, historical information on the Tribunal's proceedings and cases, as well as interactive debates on international criminal justice and reconciliation in the former Yugoslavia. That would not only meet the primary objective of the archives project, which is easy and open access to our work by the interested public; it would also guarantee the seamless continuation of the long-standing work and achievements of the Tribunal's outreach programme, which are described in my report.

The Tribunal's achievements would not have been possible without the vital support of the members of this Assembly. The creation of the Tribunal in 1993 heralded a new era in international affairs. It led to the establishment of many other international criminal justice institutions, which together work towards a single goal: fighting impunity and bringing justice to victims of gross violations of international law. But the Tribunal's work has also had a deep impact on domestic judiciaries, particularly in the former Yugoslavia. Those judges, prosecutors and defence lawyers are the actors that will most fundamentally contribute to the lasting development of the rule of law in the region, which, 15 years ago, was still the scene of one of the most brutal conflicts of the twentieth century. Once the Tribunal completes its cases, those are the people whom the international community must continue to support if it truly wants to guarantee long-term peace and prosperity in that part of the world.

I call upon all Member States to assist us in our commitment to seeing the work of the Tribunal successfully through to the end and to provide support to those institutions in the former Yugoslavia which will carry on our mission to fight impunity.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Albania; and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

This year once again, the European Union intends to reaffirm its constant and unwavering support for the work of the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda (ICTR) and the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), as correctly recalled by their respective Presidents, Mr. Byron and Mr. Pocar. The EU thanks them both for their excellent reports (A/63/209 and A/63/210) and welcomes their efforts successfully to complete the work of the two Tribunals in accordance with the completion strategy specified by the Security Council.

It is still too early to make a final assessment of the work of the Tribunals, whose job is not completely finished, but we can already underscore their influence and their achievements.

First, since their establishment, both Tribunals have embodied the need to fight impunity and the refusal to let the perpetrators of morally outrageous crimes escape justice. They were forerunners in creating jurisprudence that is a source of inspiration for all national and international jurisdictions that will have to address such crimes. Their record bears that out. International criminal justice does exist, it prevails and, sooner or later, the perpetrators will answer to it for their heinous crimes.

Secondly, apart from the qualitative aspect, from a quantitative standpoint the work of both Tribunals has been impressive. The numbers provided by their Presidents speak for themselves. If we include the cases of lesser importance assigned to national jurisdictions, few perpetrators are still at large. The European Union would like to pay special tribute to the work of the Tribunals' staff — especially judges, prosecutors and registrars — who have redoubled their efforts to adhere to the completion strategy. Thanks to the additional ad litem judges, the Tribunals should complete the ongoing proceedings within the specified time limits.

The arrests last June of Stojan Župljanin and, after 13 years at large, of Radovan Karadžić, represent a major breakthrough for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The EU commends Serbia's cooperation, which made that possible. It recalls that full cooperation with the ICTY was essential to the EU stabilization and association strategy towards all countries of the region. We now expect Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić to be arrested and, in that regard, count on the continued cooperation of the States of the region with the Tribunal.

With regard to the ICTR, the overall record is also extremely positive, although we regret that 13 accused have yet to be brought to justice. The European Union urges all States to improve their cooperation with the ICTR and to fulfil their obligations with respect to the arrest and return of the accused at large. We call particularly on the Kenyan Government to do its utmost to secure the arrest of Félicien Kabuga and his surrender to Arusha.

Strengthening the Rwandan legal system to improve its ability to judge cases transferred from the Tribunal is also one of the goals of the European Union. The EU notes with appreciation the efforts made by Rwanda to meet the requirements involved in guaranteeing the right to a fair trial, and hopes that those efforts will allow the ICTR to transfer lower-ranked defendants before the Rwandan courts. Such a transfer is an important part of the Tribunal's completion strategy.

The Tribunals are approaching the end of their completion strategy. Neither Tribunal was intended to be permanent. They will cease to exist when the Security Council deems that the job for which they were set up has been accomplished. We look forward to that moment, as it will mark the end of the Tribunals' mission and confirm their undisputed success. One thing must, however, be clear: High-level fugitives, such as Mladić, Hadžić and Kabuga, must be judged by an international tribunal and cannot count on impunity or on being forgotten.

It is important that the Tribunals be granted adequate resources to enable them to meet the completion strategy time limits set by the Security Council as regards ongoing proceedings. The EU acknowledges that the arrests of Župljanin and Karadžić will most likely lead to those deadlines being revised, as their trials cannot be rushed. The same will be true for the other high-level fugitives if, as hoped, they are caught soon. We also understand that the transfer of low-ranking defendants before national jurisdictions is not easy to decide. However, we must emphasize that the Tribunals must continue to make all necessary efforts to complete their work within the Security Council time frames.

The EU is committed to preserving the legacy of the Tribunals after their closure. We believe that, if high-ranking fugitives are still at large upon completion of the Tribunals, a mechanism that can reconstitute the capacity to try them once they are arrested must be set up. Furthermore, we are determined that such a mechanism, which must be streamlined, efficient and economical, should allow for the management of residual functions, which must be maintained for the purposes of administrating justice in conditions of fairness and security. Finally, we believe that the United Nations should maintain ownership and control over the Tribunals' records.

In general, the EU believes that it is the duty of the United Nations to guarantee the integrity and continuity of the Tribunals' legacy. The completion of their work should in no way signal an end to their mission of spreading international justice and the principles that led to their creation: the rejection of impunity and the will for justice to be served.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Canada, Australia and my own country, New Zealand — the CANZ delegations. At the outset, Canada, Australia and New Zealand wish to reaffirm their strong support for the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Both Tribunals have made and continue to make a significant contribution towards fulfilling our shared goal of ending impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The jurisprudence of both Tribunals forms part of their legacy, and one that other international criminal tribunals, including the International Criminal Court, as well as national courts, will continue to draw on for years to come. By bringing to justice the perpetrators of the most shocking crimes, the Tribunals have helped to strengthen the rule of law and promote long-term stability and reconciliation in the Balkans and in Rwanda, showing that peace and justice can indeed go hand in hand.

A key focus for both Tribunals now is the implementation of their completion strategies. The arrest of the indictees who are still at large is a crucial component of those strategies. We note with satisfaction that both Tribunals have secured further arrests during the course of the year, including, as reported by the President, the transfer of Radovan Karadžić to The Hague. We urge Member States to redouble their efforts to expedite the arrest and surrender of the remaining high-level fugitives, notably Ratko Mladić, Goran Hadžić and ICTR indictee Félicien Kabuga.

CANZ is encouraged by the commitment of both Tribunals to implementation of their completion strategies. We welcome the ongoing work on residual issues being done by both the Tribunals themselves and the Security Council's informal working group. We acknowledge the many and varied challenges those issues present. We also welcome the increased efficiency measures for the trial and appeal processes. At the same time, CANZ acknowledges the difficult balancing act that is required in order to wind down the operations of the Tribunals while still retaining sufficient staff capacity to deal with the remaining cases in a manner that is consistent with due process.

We note the additional workload placed on both Tribunals as a result of the recent arrests. For the ICTR, that has required an adjustment to the projected time frame for completion of its trials, with the result that the President asked the Security Council for a one-year extension. CANZ urges both Tribunals to continue to identify further reforms that will enable them to complete their work as efficiently and promptly as possible.

Referral of cases to national jurisdictions is another key component of the completion strategies. CANZ recognizes that there are a number of benefits to referring cases to the national jurisdictions where the crimes occurred, including the positive contribution domestic proceedings can make to national reconciliation processes. Accordingly, CANZ welcomes the referral of the remaining mid- and low-level accused in the ICTY to the courts of that region.

CANZ also welcomes the steps that Rwanda has taken over recent years to strengthen its national justice system and its capacity to prosecute serious crimes, including its abolition of the death penalty. We encourage Rwanda to continue its efforts and note that, while there has not been a referral to Rwanda yet, we hope that further progress will enable that in future.

As we approach the end of the mandates for the Tribunals, the international community will have to reflect on how to address the issue of the prosecution of those who are subject to outstanding arrest warrants. The main options include the referral and transfer to national jurisdictions, as well as the extension of the ICTR and ICTY mandates. The view of CANZ is clear — a strategy needs to be devised to ensure that impunity is not an option, as that would undermine the significant gains of the past two decades. Our overarching concern is to avoid impunity for those crimes.

CANZ welcomes the statements of both Presidents on the work that both Tribunals are doing on residual issues in the context of the completion strategy. A number of those require careful consideration. They include how to deal with the enforcement of sentences, the preservation and protection of archives, the monitoring of cases referred and issues relating to protected and relocated witnesses, as well as to possible future applications by convicted persons, for example, for review of their cases on the basis of newly discovered facts. Those issues present practical challenges that require the development of principled but effective mechanisms. CANZ encourages further discussion among the international community on the potential benefits of joint approaches to those residual issues for the ICTR, ICTY and other ad hoc international tribunals.

In closing, the ICTY and ICTR continue to contribute significantly to the fight against impunity. The successful completion of their work relies on cooperation and support from all States. We call upon States to give practical effect to their commitment to an effective system of international criminal justice. For our part, Canada, Australia and New Zealand will continue to offer the Tribunals our full support and cooperation in the closing but still vital stage of their existence.

Mr. Jurica (Croatia): At the outset, I would like to welcome the Presidents of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), Judge Pocar and Judge Byron, and thank them for presenting their respective reports (A/63/210 and A/63/209).

Fifteen years ago, the international community established those two ad hoc Tribunals with high expectations: to help bring about peace and end impunity, to bring justice to victims, and to provide a deterrent for future crimes. They have demonstrated that international criminal justice does exist and that it is inseparable from the values that the United Nations stands for. They were the precursors and inspiration for the establishment of the first permanent International Criminal Court. Their jurisprudence created a historical record, reaffirming our belief that there can be no peace without justice. Individual criminal responsibility is not an obstacle, but a catalyst to reconciliation. As

the President of the Republic of Croatia, Stjepan Mesić, has emphasized on many occasions, in order to avoid the notion of the collective guilt of nations, it is indispensable to establish individual criminal responsibility.

As the mandates of the two Tribunals are drawing to an end and we begin looking into the mechanisms that will allow a number of essential residual functions to continue after the conclusion of the trials, we have to be careful not to lose sight of the purpose for which they were established — to close the impunity gap. That is why the international community cannot afford to declare their mandates complete before every effort has been made to bring those most responsible to justice, however long that takes.

I would like to make a few specific remarks regarding the ICTY, given the importance my country attaches to the Tribunal's work.

The arrests this year of the fugitives Radovan Karadžić and Stojan Župljanin are of vital importance to completing the Tribunal's exit strategy and accomplishing the purpose for which the Tribunal was founded. We hope to see an early beginning of their trials. Without bringing to justice those most senior and most responsible for crimes committed in the wars against Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, we cannot speak of completing the Tribunal's mandate. That is why it is crucial that the remaining fugitives, Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić, also face justice. We cannot accept that their impunity should outlive the existence of the Tribunal. Reasons of expediency should not be allowed to overshadow the fact that those two individuals, who have evaded justice for many years now, held the most prominent military and political positions — Mladić as the Commander of the General Staff of the Bosnian Serb Army and Hadžić as so-called President of the so-called self-proclaimed Republic of Serbian Krajina in Croatia — and that they have been indicted for some of the most atrocious crimes committed in post-Second World War Europe, namely, the massacres committed in Srebrenica and Vukovar.

Last week, the ICTY Appeals Chamber confirmed a 35-year sentence for Milan Martic, a former so-called President of the so-called self-proclaimed Republic of Serbian Krajina in Croatia, who was sentenced for war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated against the civilian population in Croatia.

The appeals proceedings with respect to the judgement rendered a year ago in the case of the so-called Vukovar Three — Radic, Sljivancanin and Mrksic — are still ongoing. Notwithstanding the understandable reactions of the victims' families and the general public in Croatia and elsewhere to the initial verdicts in that case, I would like to limit myself to expressing our hope that the appellate proceedings will hand down a just judgement that corresponds to the gravity of the crimes committed.

As the Prime Minister of Croatia, Ivo Sanader, said in this Assembly last fall, a year ago,

> "a just outcome of prosecution is the only way to discourage those who might consider repeating such crimes, today or in the future. Just punishment offers a measure of respect for the victims. Just punishment is the best deterrent. Just punishment also serves truth and opens the way for lasting peace, security and reconciliation". (*A/62/PV.25, p. 8*)

By the same token, credible justice must not leave any impunity gaps, and that is why it remains crucial that the Tribunal not close its doors before trying the remaining fugitives.

The war imposed on Croatia in 1991 has left a sad legacy of war crimes. The Croatian Government has invested serious efforts into prosecuting those crimes by adjusting its judicial structure and material laws, by continuously consolidating its judicial capacities and by strengthening cooperation with authorities in the region.

Croatia's judiciary has clearly demonstrated its ability to conduct trials in even the most sensitive cases, including the one case that was transferred to it by the ICTY. Similarly, Croatia's judiciary has developed an excellent working relationship with the Tribunal's organs, including the Transition Team within the Office of the Prosecutor on so-called Category II cases, as well as in ongoing domestic investigations and trials. We find that relationship to be of vital importance and we are confident that it will continue in the future.

Croatia is dedicated to and sincere in assisting and cooperating with the Tribunal to complete its mandate at an early date. Over the years, we have processed 804 requests for assistance from the Office of the Prosecutor and delivered tens of thousands of

documents, over 19,000 of which are from the Ministry of Defence alone, including those emanating from the highest-ranking military officials.

The Government's commitment to cooperating fully with the Tribunal remains strong and unequivocal. I can assure the Assembly that the Croatian authorities have and will continue to do everything within their competencies to ensure a prompt response to requests from the Office of the Prosecutor.

In that regard, let me clarify, with respect to paragraph 79 of the Tribunal's annual report (A/63/210), that the relevant Croatian authorities continue to work on the pending issue and expect to present the results shortly to the Tribunal. The Tribunal's decision of 16 September granted Croatia's request to continue its investigations in order to establish the existence of the documents sought by the Office of the Prosecutor, the Trial Chamber not being in a position to draw any conclusions as to whether such documents do exist.

In discussing the fifteenth annual report of the ICTY, I would like to draw attention to the issue of the serving of sentences. We find it difficult to justify the discrepancy that exists between the practice of the ICTR and that of the ICTY. Whereas the former concluded an agreement on the serving of sentences in Rwanda this year, the ICTY still does not allow for the possibility that sentences can be served in the country where the crime was committed. While we understand that such an approach may have been dictated by the security considerations prevailing at the time of the inception of the Tribunal, today, 15 years later, such practice seems outdated and is adversely affecting the humanitarian conditions of the sentenced persons and their families. I would like to repeat that my Government is ready to permit its citizens to serve their sentences in Croatia.

Ms. Juul (Norway): Let me start by expressing Norway's continuing support for and full recognition of the achievements and high standards of the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), as reflected in the Tribunals' well reasoned judgements and the annual reports before us (A/63/209 and A/63/210). We would like to thank the Presidents of the two Tribunals, Judges Byron and Pocar, for their detailed and informative reports, which reflect the progress made during the period under review.

The work of the Tribunals has been crucial in advancing the cause of justice in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. Moreover, the Tribunals will leave a legacy of international jurisprudence that can guide future courts and deter the future commission of those grave crimes, as well as prevent impunity for potential perpetrators. As such, they are contributing to the development of international criminal justice and the fight against impunity for mass atrocities in general.

We commend both Tribunals for their commitment to adhering to the completion strategies, while ensuring that due process standards and fundamental legal principles are fully respected. The Rwanda Tribunal report (A/63/209) stresses that the success of the completion strategy will continue to depend on the support and cooperation of States. We fully agree and we appeal to all States to demonstrate their full cooperation with both Tribunals. As the work of the Tribunals is nearing completion, it is crucial that States give it their unreserved support.

We welcome the recent decisions of the Security Council to extend the terms of office of permanent and ad litem judges in order to enhance the effectiveness of trial proceedings and to contribute towards the implementation of the completion strategies.

It is of the utmost importance that all States honour their financial commitments and pay their assessed contributions on time. Furthermore, Member States must fulfil their obligation to arrest and transfer fugitives to the Tribunals without delay. We compliment the Prosecutors on their efforts to secure the arrest of remaining fugitives and we urge the involved States to cooperate fully with the Tribunals. We welcome the arrests of high-level accused during the period under review.

In particular, we welcome the arrest and transfer to the ICTY of Radovan Karadžić. That is important for the victims of the crimes and it will help to heal the wounds of the war in the Balkans. Radovan Karadžić's arrest and transfer to the ICTY are indeed a victory for international law, an important contribution to furthering justice, and a big step towards addressing the question of accountability for some of the worst atrocities committed in Europe since the Second World War, not least the Srebrenica massacre.

While noting the successes of both Tribunals, it is important to reiterate that the main mission of the Tribunals will not be fulfilled unless the highest-

ranking remaining indictees are brought to justice. It is not acceptable that perpetrators of serious international crimes are evading legal proceedings. The failure to arrest the remaining fugitives continues to be of concern to us.

Norway has entered into an agreement with the ICTY regarding the enforcement of sentences and cooperates closely with the Rwanda Tribunal in several fields. There is an urgent need for more States to enter into agreements regarding the enforcement of sentences. It is unreasonable that only a few Member States should shoulder that important responsibility. We therefore commend the conclusion of new agreements by the ICTY, as mentioned in the report, and look forward to more agreements being concluded.

We strongly support the Tribunals' external activities and their involvement and cooperation with local judiciaries. As noted in the ICTY report, an active engagement with local judiciaries will help to ensure that local courts have the capacity to continue the Tribunal's work in the future, thereby ensuring the preservation of its legacy through the prosecution of war crimes cases by domestic courts.

Another important aspect we would like to highlight is the work being done through outreach activities. The report of the Rwanda Tribunal gives a detailed account of such activities, which we regard as an invaluable part of the Tribunal's work.

All States must honour their international obligation to cooperate with requests for full and effective assistance to the Tribunals. That applies with regard to witnesses, financial and material support and practical assistance in the enforcement of sentences. All States should demonstrate their commitment to the Tribunals by means of resolute and concrete action.

Norway will stand by our long-term commitment to the successful completion of the mandates assigned to the two Tribunals by the Security Council.

Mr. Jevremović (Serbia): Before I proceed, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Fausto Pocar, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), for presenting the fifteenth annual report of the Tribunal (A/63/210) to the General Assembly.

The Republic of Serbia is fully committed to honouring its international obligations and, during the reporting period, continued to provide adequate responses in several areas of cooperation. In May 2008, the Government adopted a framework for future cooperation with the ICTY and, in compliance with its provisions, two of the most wanted remaining fugitives, Stojan Župljanin and Radovan Karadžić, were arrested by Serbian authorities and transferred to the detention unit of the Tribunal in June and July 2008, respectively. The National Security Council of Serbia, the Action Team in charge of tracking fugitives and the Office of the War Crimes Prosecutor played a central role in the arrests, as stated in the report.

Furthermore, during the reporting period, Serbia once again demonstrated its capacity to take action at critical moments. It also cooperated by granting waivers to all persons requested by the Tribunal and provided thousands of documents from the archives — including classified documents — related to ongoing cases. At the same time, exchanges of visits by top officials between Belgrade and The Hague have become a regular practice. It is also important to point out that persons who took part in the sheltering of fugitives have been identified and prosecuted by the Serbian authorities. Those are considerable achievements, accomplished through much hard work and dedication.

The new Government of Serbia is fully determined to honour its commitment to bring to justice all indicted individuals by transferring them to the Tribunal and trying them in domestic courts. In that context, my country also recognizes the efforts of the new Prosecutor, Mr. Serge Brammertz, appointed in January 2008, in securing the arrests of the remaining fugitives in close cooperation with Serbian authorities. The Action Team of Serbia continues to the maximum to carry out its operations to track down the fugitives, which gives us every reason to believe that Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić, the two remaining indictees, cannot continue to hide forever and that they will soon be apprehended and transferred to the Tribunal.

Successful completion of its cooperation with the Tribunal is one of the most important objectives of the new Serbian Government. After all, it is in the interest of the people of Serbia to complete that cooperation swiftly and effectively. Serbia supports the completion strategy of the ICTY, defined in Security Council resolutions 1503 (2003) and 1534 (2004). We believe that the basic precondition for the success of the strategy is the capacity of domestic courts to process the cases transferred to them by the ICTY in accordance with international legal standards. It is only

through joint cooperation that we shall be able to carry through the completion strategy by 2010. In that regard, I would like to point out that the issues related to residual mechanisms are very important and complex and that they require in-depth discussion by experts within the relevant bodies of the General Assembly.

However, problems and challenges remain. If we are to overcome them, satisfy justice and uphold the rule of law, we must address the crucially important issue of witness protection. Serbia has done its best to protect witnesses and has acted on each of the requests of the Office of the Prosecutor. Accordingly, the Serbian War Crimes Prosecutor has facilitated the testimony of witnesses and has, on several occasions, protected those who had received threats. The report concludes that interference with witnesses, particularly in the form of witness intimidation and their growing failure to appear voluntarily to testify, remains a grave concern. My country is also seriously concerned by the inability — or even flat refusal — of some countries and organizations to provide witness protection and prevent the disappearance of potential witnesses. We therefore call for international cooperation to redress the situation, even at this late stage.

In conclusion, I would like to express my hope that cooperation between the countries concerned and the Tribunal will continue and conclude successfully, to the benefit of overall regional reconciliation.

Mr. Muchemi (Kenya): I wish to express my appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the able manner in which you continue to guide the deliberations of the Assembly.

At the outset, I wish to thank the Presidents of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for their comprehensive annual reports, submitted to the Assembly in conformity with the respective Statutes establishing the Tribunals.

My delegation appreciates the work of both Presidents and the competent manner in which they have continued to manage the affairs of the Tribunals. We note the progress of their work in the cases already handled and express optimism regarding the conclusion of the pending cases. We are grateful for the extension of the Tribunals' mandates for a further period of one year to enable them to complete their work in a proper manner. We note that achieving a sustainable and long-term mechanism for addressing, inter alia, the transfer and trial of remaining Tribunal cases, the pursuit of fugitives, the monitoring of sentences and the management of archives is a challenge to be overcome.

Kenya strongly supports the international criminal justice system. We recognize that Tribunals must provide and protect the proper administration of justice by prosecuting those who promote impunity. Similarly, the cooperation of Member States is critical if the courts are to succeed in restoring justice, securing peace and preventing the possibility of future mass atrocities. Kenya is prepared to do its part.

Permit me to express my delegation's views regarding a matter that was reported to the Security Council in June 2008 concerning a fugitive who is wanted by the ICTR for prosecution. The Prosecutor of the ICTR, Mr. Hassan Jallow, drew attention to the case of Félicien Kabuga, who, among other indictees, has not been apprehended to face justice. In his statement, Mr. Jallow alleged that there had been several reported sightings of the fugitive in the territory of Kenya, thereby alluding to his presence in my country. Those remarks are of grave concern to my delegation.

In that regard, I listened carefully to the statement by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union and wish to reassure the Assembly of the unwavering commitment of my Government to cooperate with the Tribunal in all respects.

I would like to reiterate that, in the Kabuga case, my Government has fully cooperated with the ICTR officials, as called for by the United Nations Security Council, in trying to trace Mr. Kabuga for the purpose of bringing him to justice. For the past three years, the Government of Kenya has been engaged with the Prosecutor's Office, largely through the Joint Kenya-ICTR Task Force. Further, in demonstrating our commitment to the cause of the Tribunal, in May 2008 the Government obtained an order from the High Court of Kenya freezing property belonging to the estate of Mr. Kabuga. That case is still pending before our courts in Kenya.

In conclusion, I wish to assure you, Sir, of my delegation's continued commitment to the high ideals of international criminal justice and the eradication of impunity. Kenya will continue to implement the recommendations of the Joint Kenya-ICTR Task Force.

Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda): My delegation wishes to thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to address the General Assembly on the important issue of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). My delegation also expresses its thanks to the Secretary-General for his report and to Justice Byron for his presentation (A/63/209).

The crimes falling under the ICTR's mandate were committed in Rwanda, mostly by Rwandans and against fellow Rwandans. That makes Rwanda the most responsible and concerned State in the pursuit of justice for those crimes. In that regard, Rwanda finds it imperative that it participate fully in the determination of matters pertaining to the Tribunal, particularly the completion process. We have continued to improve our institutional mechanisms for cooperation with the Tribunal to keep pace with the completion process and the associated cooperation challenges. We are happy to inform the Assembly that, to date, we have been able to handle all requests made by the various organs of the Tribunal.

In resolutions 1503 (2003) and 1504 (2003), the Security Council directed the two Tribunals to wind up their activities within specified deadlines. Resolution 1503 (2003) further directed that the middle- and low-ranking cases be transferred to national jurisdictions, including Rwanda. As a matter of State responsibility, Rwanda began close consultations with the Tribunal and set the ground for receiving and conducting the trials of some of the cases that may be transferred from the ICTR.

A comprehensive piece of legislation was passed in March 2006 to govern the transfer of cases from the ICTR or any other State to Rwanda. The law provides sufficient guarantees for a fair trial. It was specifically drawn up on the Tribunal's rules of procedure and evidence, as well as other best practices recognized and applied by the Tribunal. The law allows the Tribunal to monitor trials and recognizes the Tribunal's primacy and right to recall the transferred case.

Modern court rooms have been prepared. For the past two years, a joint programme has been running between the ICTR and Rwanda, under which we have conducted familiarization and interaction visits between the Tribunal and Rwanda, together with workshops for judges, the prosecution, the bar and staff. A modern holding cell has been constructed in Kigali to accommodate ICTR detainees who would be appearing in court.

In the same way, an agreement for the transfer of those convicted by the Tribunal to Rwanda was signed on 4 March 2008. The agreement is founded on the requirement provided for under the ICTR statute to have sentences served in Rwanda. We have a modern correctional facility that is intended to accommodate those from Arusha who have been convicted by the ICTR, as well as those accused by the ICTR who may still be convicted.

Both the Prosecutor and the Tribunal's Registrar have conducted a series of visits to Rwanda to verify Rwanda's readiness and willingness to receive the outstanding workload from the ICTR. They have expressed their satisfaction with the level of compliance with the internationally recognized standards and norms attained by Rwanda's judicial institutions.

We were able to make all those preparations with the support of numerous members of the international community. That results from the fact that Rwanda has a shared interest with the Security Council in ensuring a smooth process of winding up the ICTR.

The fugitives still at large are not limited to the 13 appearing on the Tribunal's list. We have repeatedly appealed to the Security Council to see that the conclusion of the ICTR mandate does not become an amnesty to those not included on the Tribunal's condensed list. My Government appreciates the efforts of some Governments that have apprehended some of the fugitives. The proceedings for their extradition to Rwanda are under way, which is largely a result of the judicial sector reforms and capacity development evident in Rwanda, as previously stated.

Rwanda's commitment to comply with international standards of fair trial and judicial independence is unquestionable, as it is central to my Government's policy, founded on our continued fight against impunity. We have registered significant progress in that important aspect. The progress registered meets the requirements inherent in the Tribunal's completion process. Since May 2007, the ICTR Prosecutor has filed five requests for transfer of cases to Rwanda for trial. The five referral applications have been processed, and many of them were denied referral to Rwanda.

In spite of these efforts, my country is seriously concerned about the direction that the issue of the referral of cases is taking. We are particularly concerned that this process has the potential to undermine the trust and reputation we have painstakingly built. It is this trust and confidence that has led certain Governments to apprehend some of the fugitives found in their respective territories.

Our achievements in judicial reform are not intangible; they are very visible. Our participation in the completion process is in response to a call; it is not a public relations exercise. We must be judged on the basis of our conduct and our policies, not on the basis of presumed future misconduct. We expect and hope to inherit from the ICTR a legacy that complements our efforts. What we are looking for is a legacy that supports the growth of our institutions.

In 1999, Rwanda protested conduct of the Court in the case of Barayagwiza, who was eventually convicted by the ICTR, through to the appellate level. The ICTR has since then handed down five acquittals; this has not raised any protest from Rwanda. The Tribunal finally chose to refer the 1999 incident, but it kept silent on the subsequent acquittals in order to portray Rwanda as a country that is opposed to acquittals. We view that as a serious misinterpretation and one without basis. We denounce the message in the ruling that portrays our system as one that cannot be trusted, because the ultimate beneficiaries of that trend are fugitives still at large. Unless the Chamber is not aware of the regard and esteem it ought to attract, the ruling amounts to an invitation to States not to cooperate with us. We are informed that the ICTR Prosecutor intends to appeal the decision and we will continue to follow developments in the case with interest.

Rwanda is committed to upholding justice and ending impunity. It is therefore incumbent upon the Security Council and the General Assembly to establish support mechanisms to bolster Rwanda's efforts. Under such mechanisms, issues related to post-ICTR residual functions could be addressed.

At this juncture, Rwanda still believes that the major interest shared with the General Assembly is to find an amicable conclusion to the ad hoc mandate of the Tribunal. In this period, we need a more sustainable and long-term mechanism between States Members of the United Nations and the Government of Rwanda, under which the key issues — particularly the transfer and trial of all remaining ICTR cases, the pursuit of fugitives at large, the monitoring of service of sentences and the management of archives — would be addressed. We need a mechanism to ensure that the set goals do not shift gradually. We need to guard against endless faits accomplis. It is through such a mechanism that we can have a smooth and effective completion process.

As pointed out previously, in March of this year Rwanda signed an agreement on the service of sentences. We have completed all the arrangements for having all the convicts sent to Rwanda to serve their sentences. There is no legal or administrative ground for the failure or delay in having the convicts sent to Rwanda to serve their sentences.

The issue of the transfer of archives to Rwanda remains pending. Consultations have been ongoing with the team designated to study and make recommendations on the matter. We reiterate our desire and readiness to take full custody of the archives. Given that this undertaking is a crucial one, the earlier formal discussions can begin the better.

I thank the President of the General Assembly, the European Union and all other States for their support for the ICTR and for Rwanda.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the leadership of both Tribunals for the annual reports submitted on the work of these bodies.

First of all, allow me to recall that the Tribunals were established by the Security Council in specific historical circumstances as a temporary measure aimed, inter alia, at restoring and maintaining peace in the regions as well as combating impunity in a situation of the inability of the legal systems of the States concerned to act.

It is now self-evident that there has been a substantive change in these circumstances and that the term set for these bodies is expiring. The primary goal of the Tribunals is the timely completion of pending cases regarding the highest-level leaders suspected of being most responsible for crimes. In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1503 (2003) and 1534 (2004), the other cases must be referred to national jurisdictions.

We take note of the progress achieved in that respect by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), which is focusing its efforts on the two aforementioned issues. We consider the Tribunal's measures on referral of a number of cases to national jurisdictions to be of the utmost importance, and we welcome the active steps undertaken by the Prosecutor in this regard.

The report of the Rwanda Tribunal (A/63/209) has a straightforward manner of providing information on progress achieved here. The implementation of the completion strategy is declared to be the major goal of the Tribunal, and statistical data on the status of cases pending before the Tribunal is included in the summary.

Regarding the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), as we see it, its leadership is losing sight of the parameters prescribed for the work of the Tribunal. Indeed, in the entire report (A/63/210), there is no section entitled "Completion strategy". Progress in cases pending must be deduced by comparing several reports. Instead, there is an extensive section on the so-called diplomatic activities of the ICTY — which, in fact, go beyond its mandate — and the report complains about the level of cooperation on the part of States. Here, we should like to note the arrest of the indictees Župljanin and Karadžić, which demonstrates a high level of cooperation with the Court.

The report cites no measures related to the closing of the Tribunal. In addition, a claim is made that all ICTY indictees should be tried by that organ and should not be referred to national jurisdictions. In our view, that policy reflects mistrust in the national judicial systems of the Balkan States and contradicts Security Council resolutions 1503 (2003) and 1534 (2004). Only a few of the ICTY indictees listed can be characterized as the most senior leaders suspected of being most responsible for crimes; more often, those in question are middle- and low-ranking military commanders.

Furthermore, we wish to emphasize that our position of principle that States bear primary responsibility for bringing to justice perpetrators of war crimes and other serious international crimes remains unchanged. International criminal courts have only a supplementary role to play, since they cannot replace national judicial systems.

Yet another issue that is not addressed in the report is the Tribunal's shortcomings in the area of witness protection. Unfortunately, the inadequacy of the measures taken in that regard contributed to a virtual failure in the important case of Haradinaj and led to the acquittal of quite a few other accused or to their receiving ridiculous sentences.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that the deadlines set out in the completion strategy are fast approaching. The Tribunals have already acknowledged their inability to meet the first deadline — completion of the cases before the Trial Chamber in the first instance by the end of 2008 — and, at their request, the Security Council and the General Assembly have extended the mandates of the Tribunals' judges until the end of 2009. We wish to reiterate that that step is an exceptional measure that, we expect, will enable the Tribunals to focus their efforts on priority goals and to complete their work on time. We believe that the Council will very soon be able to establish a mechanism for carrying out the Tribunals' residual functions after their closure.

Mr. Maqungo (South Africa): My delegation wishes to thank Mr. Fausto Pocar, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and Mr. Dennis Byron, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), for their statements introducing the reports of their respective Tribunals.

My delegation commends both Tribunals for the steps they are taking to ensure that they achieve their completion strategies. In particular, we welcome the measures taken to increase the efficiency of the Tribunals in processing trials by holding a high number of trials simultaneously, to amend their Rules of Procedure and Evidence for the purpose of expediting proceedings and to make optimum use of ad litem judges.

The completion strategies are time-bound. Therefore, notwithstanding the steps that the Tribunals are taking to increase efficiency, their cases will, owing to the passage of time and the inability to carry out arrests within the lifetime of the Tribunals, have to be referred to national jurisdictions. Thus, referrals to national jurisdictions are central to achieving the completion strategies set out in resolution 1503 (2003) and 1534 (2004).

To that end, we commend the various countries that have accepted cases from the Tribunals. However, we are particularly keen to see that the countries in which the crimes were committed assume the responsibility of accepting referrals from the Tribunals. In that light, we are particularly disappointed that the Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has to date declined the Prosecutor's request to refer three cases to Rwanda. Having heard the statement of the representative of Rwanda regarding the steps that that country has taken and the interaction that is taking place between it and the ICTR, it is our hope that there will be a careful study of that finding of the Tribunal so that the necessary adjustments can be made at the national level to enable referrals to take place in the future.

We therefore welcome any effort to provide technical assistance to Rwanda and the countries of the former Yugoslavia to enable them to absorb cases from the Criminal Tribunals and related cases. We strongly believe that justice sector reform is a critical element of post-conflict reconstruction and that it contributes to security sector reform.

With regard to both Tribunals, there are indicted persons still at large, some of whom are particularly high-level accused or are alleged to have committed crimes that should be dealt with at the international level. For example, we have been advised that, in relation to the ICTR, there is a fugitive, Félicien Kabuga, and in relation to the ICTY there is Ratko Mladić. It is important that those fugitives be swiftly brought to justice, and we call for full cooperation with the Tribunals with a view to their arrest and surrender for trial.

The fact that the Tribunals are working towards completing their work means that we must ensure that they continue to receive sufficient resources to enable them to complete their work on time. We must ensure that the Tribunals are able to retain the judges and other staff necessary to complete their work on time, consistent with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

As States, we must continue to extend cooperation with regard to the travel of witnesses, the arrest and transfer of accused and the resettlement of individuals acquitted by the Tribunals. Furthermore, we need to address the issue of the legacy that will be left by the Tribunals and to ensure that we preserve their achievements. The Tribunals were established by the Security Council in keeping with its responsibility to maintain international peace and security. Therefore, as we consider their legacy and achievements, we have to measure them by the extent to which they have contributed to the maintenance of international peace and security. We in South Africa believe that the Tribunals have made an immense contribution to stability and peace, both in Rwanda and in the former Yugoslavia.

However, there will continue to be ongoing work to consolidate those achievements and to ensure the preservation of the Tribunals' legacy. That work includes ensuring that the passage of time does not result in impunity for any fugitives. Therefore, an international mechanism for prosecuting the few high-level fugitives still at large will have to be established after the work of the Tribunals has been completed. It is also important that the archives of the Tribunals be preserved and stored in a place where future generations, particularly in the affected countries, can have access to them and draw lessons from the work of both Tribunals.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these agenda items.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda items 67 and 68?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 10 and 101 (*continued*)

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its second session (A/63/92)

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218 and Corr.1)

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting on the second report of the Peacebuilding Commission. We would first like to thank Ambassador Yukio Takasu of Japan for his valuable work in his capacity as Chairman of the Commission. The text of the second report reflects the quality of his work and that of the Chairpersons of the country-specific configurations and the Working Group on Lessons Learned. I also want to extend my congratulations to

the Peacebuilding Support Office, the efforts of which continue to be fundamental in achieving the objectives of the Commission.

Chile, while reiterating its commitment to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and its programmes, wishes to state that a mission from Chile is currently underway in Sierra Leone to explore a programme of cooperation in the areas of education and small business, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). That is in addition to Chile's direct contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund.

We want to underline the synergy that the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Chairpersons of the various configurations have established with the private sector. The effective participation of the private sector in the peacebuilding processes undoubtedly helps in the creation of jobs and the efficient demobilization of those who once took up arms, in particular young people.

In that context, we have welcomed the strengthening of the linkages between the Peacebuilding Commission and international economic and financial institutions, in particular the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

We are pleased that the Peacebuilding Fund has more than met its original goal of $250 million. The Fund has an essential role to play in the countries' reconstruction. However, over the past two years, we have witnessed the need for greater coordination between the Fund and the Secretariat. The delegation of Chile supports the suggestion by the Chairman of the Commission to establish objective criteria for the selection of countries to be assisted by the Fund.

I would like to reiterate that the Peacebuilding Commission should not be perceived as yet another development agency. It is a commission aimed at helping to identify national priorities and at combining, mobilizing and giving advice on the economic, financial and political forces at play in order to promote the integral reconstruction of countries emerging from crisis.

The work of the Commission should, of course, show clear results for the population of the countries concerned. In that respect, education, support for small and medium-sized businesses and the strengthening of government institutions are fundamental for lasting peace and efforts in those areas must go beyond quick-impact projects.

I want to once again emphasize the great potential of regional organizations in their joint efforts with the Peacebuilding Commission, as in the case of the concrete support lent to efforts for peacebuilding by the African Union.

As the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission has said, the Commission is a new organ, and is still evolving. It requires fine-tuning and better coordination between the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Organizational Committee and the country-specific configurations, taking into consideration the fact that our workload has increased significantly, which complicates efficient and timely coordination. We should also be aware of the challenge of deploying the Commission on the ground in the context of the ongoing efforts on system-wide coherence and the vision of attaining "One United Nations".

In addition, the evolution of the Peacebuilding Commission should take into account the aspiration for adequate representation that Latin America and the Caribbean region have had since the Commission's creation. That aspiration was emphatically highlighted by the former Permanent Representative of Colombia in 2006, in her capacity as President of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, when the Commission was established. At that time, Latin America and the Caribbean agreed to be underrepresented, in terms of the representation they justly aspired to, but only in order to avoid blocking the establishment of the Commission. However, we believe that now is the time to find a definitive solution to that anomaly, and we trust that that will happen well before the end of the year.

The Peacebuilding Commission should not work above the Member States but work alongside them, with a comprehensive vision through which to confront the challenges of national ownership. We should take a long-term view of the matter and consider, for example, if the Commission could bring about the establishment of a collaborative team of civil experts who would be able deploy rapidly to the countries entering the peacebuilding stage, within the framework of the Commission. In that way we would be able to provide much greater assistance to those countries.

Lastly, I would like to call for continued efforts aimed at achieving sustainable peace, stability and

development in countries in which the Peacebuilding Commission could make a real contribution to confronting future challenges.

Ms. Gash (Australia): Australia remains a strong supporter of the Peacebuilding Commission. Its establishment in 2005 filled a significant institutional gap in the United Nations system in terms of assisting post-conflict States to consolidate peace and commence the task of rebuilding.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate Ambassador Takasu of Japan, whose enthusiasm and leadership as Chairperson of the Commission have helped it to start to fulfil its potential. The future success of the Commission will depend in no small part on the kind of sustained and active engagement demonstrated by Ambassador Takasu and other chairs of the Commission. We also welcome the recent appointment of Jane Holl Lute as Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, and we look forward to working with her in the coming years.

The annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission illustrates both how much has been achieved and how much still remains to be achieved. In the past 12 months, the Peacebuilding Commission has moved beyond initial procedural difficulties, which dominated its formative stages, to develop more effective working methods. The agenda has now expanded, with the inclusion of Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic, reflecting a growing appreciation of the valuable role the Commission has to play in helping countries transition out of conflict situations. Relations with United Nations partners, international financial institutions and regional organizations have improved and deepened. The Commission has also tackled important substantive issues, including the role of the private sector, youth employment, transitional justice, gender and the environment in peacebuilding efforts.

The results of that progress are clear. Strategic frameworks have now been adopted in partnership with Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. Through the Peacebuilding Fund, $86 million has been allocated to peacebuilding projects in countries on the Commission's agenda.

Australia supports the use of the Peacebuilding Fund as a catalytic tool to ensure the immediate release of resources to launch peacebuilding activities. Further efforts are required to strengthen processes to ensure that the Peacebuilding Fund can deliver peace dividends in a timely fashion. We are equally encouraged that bilateral and multilateral donors have supplemented those efforts with targeted assistance and technical expertise to generate more sustainable development.

Equally importantly, the Commission continues to work in a flexible and innovative manner. Visits by the Chairs have established strong connections with national stakeholders and provided a timely way to respond to events on the ground. Similarly, the creation and implementation of monitoring mechanisms provides a useful way to maintain focus on peacebuilding efforts in the medium term. Increasingly sophisticated mapping exercises are also generating better information about existing gaps in international assistance.

Australia welcomes those developments. They demonstrate that working in a spirit of partnership, guided by the principle of national ownership, the Peacebuilding Commission has the potential to help States emerge from conflict.

While much has been achieved, the challenges ahead are significant. As the Peacebuilding Commission accepts new countries, the demands on its time and expertise will increase. Current efforts to streamline its work are welcome and necessary, but the Commission will have to continue to refine its approach. It is important that lessons learned be applied to new countries as they are added to the agenda.

The Commission, and in particular the country-specific configurations, must work to improve the tools that have been developed so far. Monitoring mechanisms must be refined to include specific indicators and benchmarks. Strategic frameworks should continue to adapt to local conditions and strive to avoid duplication of existing efforts. The link between good strategy and tangible results on the ground must remain a focus.

Over the past two years, the Peacebuilding Commission has begun to build a valuable record of practice. As the central peacebuilding institution within the United Nations system, the Commission must make sure that concrete experience with such issues as elections and land reform is translated into a wider body of knowledge to inform future efforts.

In closing, it is worth noting that the path from conflict to peace is not always smooth. More than half of States emerging from conflict relapse within 10 years. The demands of peacebuilding vary from case to case, but are invariably complex and interrelated. They demand a willingness to work together, to innovate and to redouble our commitment in the face of setbacks.

Two years after its establishment, it is too early to judge the Peacebuilding Commission. However, there is reason for optimism. The modest progress made to date is a solid foundation on which to build. Australia looks forward to working with the Peacebuilding Commission as it further develops its ability to assist post-conflict States.

Mr. Ebner (Austria): Austria welcomes this opportunity to discuss the second annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/63/92) and the report of the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218).

Austria fully aligns itself with the statement that was delivered by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union on this item. I will therefore limit myself to the following few points.

Two years after the Peacebuilding Commission became operational, it may be too early to make a final assessment, but it can be said that the Commission has definitely made important contributions to post-conflict peacebuilding in the countries on its agenda. Beyond the actual cases on its agenda, the discussions in the Commission and on Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies have contributed to the development of new partnerships and a whole new methodology. By engaging a wide range of stakeholders in New York and in-country, the new methodology is based on the active involvement of all concerned — ownership and commitment by national actors coupled with a reciprocal commitment by outside partners to support the process of peacebuilding in a given country.

At the same time, the experience of the first two years seems to suggest that in its next sessions the Commission will also have to focus on ways to make its own work more efficient and effective. Otherwise, the inclusion of new countries on its agenda might lead to paralysis in the Commission's workings.

Building on the experiences of the past two years, Austria recently invited a number of ambassadors, representatives of international organizations and think tanks, and independent experts to a three-day retreat in Alpbach, Austria. In an informal setting under the Chatham House Rule, participants were able to hold discussions in several working sessions under the general topic of "Strengthening United Nations peacebuilding: creating resilient societies". The concept of resilience as the ability of societies to withstand external shocks and deal with them without falling into armed conflict was widely acknowledged as an important contribution to the further development of peacebuilding as a concept. Also, participants agreed that the regional dimension of peacebuilding warranted particular attention, since conflicts are often intertwined.

Furthermore, Austria attaches special importance to the systematic integration of a gender perspective into all aspects of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. We believe that gender-specific responses to the challenges to peacebuilding and the systematic participation of women in all aspects of peacebuilding processes are prerequisites for the success and long-term sustainability of peacebuilding efforts. In that context, Austria welcomes the presidential statement of the Security Council on mediation and the settlement of disputes.

Austria appreciates the important role played by the Peacebuilding Support Office since the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission. Despite difficult circumstances in the beginning, the Office has helped to successfully steer the Commission through its first two years. We commend the former head of the Office, Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie, for her invaluable contributions and for her leadership in the start-up phase of the Commission and the Office. At the same time, I would like to extend a warm welcome to Assistant Secretary-General Jane Holl Lute. She will have the important task of ensuring that the Office can indeed strengthen its ability to deliver substantial and systematic support for the work of the Commission, both in preparing for and servicing the work of the Commission in New York and in supporting the implementation of agreed peacebuilding strategies in-country.

In order to enable the Peacebuilding Support Office to fulfil all those tasks, Austria has decided to support its crucial work by financing the position of a Junior Professional Officer for the next two years. We hope that that contribution will help in strengthening the capacities of the Office.

Finally, Austria views the Peacebuilding Fund as an important building block in the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, with the potential to act in new and innovative ways where other funding mechanisms are not available. That is why we have made contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund every year since 2006. Our contributions total some $2.1 million to date. The Fund has already made a difference in a number of instances, both in countries that are on the agenda of the Commission and in some that are not.

At the same time, the experience of the first two years of Fund operations clearly shows that there is ample room for improvement in the Fund's workings. As the European Union presidency underlined, improving the efficiency of Fund management and its ability to produce quick results on the ground are key to the Fund's success. Austria welcomes the active role played by the Peacebuilding Fund Advisory Group and looks forward to the recommendations that will emanate from the ongoing review by the Office for Internal Oversight Services on how to strengthen the operations of the Fund and its accountability.

Mr. Ehouzou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to thank the President of the Assembly for having convened this meeting to consider the reports submitted by the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/63/92) and the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218). We have taken due note of the two reports, which provide us with information on the progress made by those two bodies during their second session.

My delegation is gratified to note that the two bodies are fulfilling their raison d'être. The work of the Commission has made it possible to establish a coherent framework for an effective partnership of national stakeholders with the international community in order to implement sustainable transformation in countries emerging from conflict.

Within that framework, the Peacebuilding Commission has developed a wide range of activities that have contributed to the drawing up of coherent recovery and resource mobilization strategies to promote the national priorities highlighted by the countries themselves. Having drawn up a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding for Burundi and Sierra Leone, the Commission has now done so for Guinea-Bissau. That opens the way for the mobilization of the resources required to facilitate a normalization of the situation. It is in that context that free and transparent elections will be held, significant domestic resources mobilized, the judiciary strengthened and the country's resilience to ever more alarming threats of destabilization looming over the nation in the area of security and health will be reinforced.

All of those measures must contribute to strengthening the State in its sovereign functions so that it can create conditions conducive to a lasting peace. We must emphasize the need to further focus urgent action on the most critical needs impacting the daily lives of people. In that respect, we cannot underestimate the importance of mobilizing resources to make the investments necessary to strengthen human resources and to establish or rebuild infrastructure vital to the proper functioning of a peacetime economy.

Beyond the focus on institutions that make up the backbone of the State, the Commission's capacity to promote synergy must also be strengthened so that the resources mobilized can have the maximum impact in terms of improving the living conditions of the peoples of countries emerging from conflict.

In that sense, the role of the Peacebuilding Fund is crucial. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for the disbursements made from the Fund for quick-impact projects and to finance transitional programmes. However, we must note that such disbursements are not always linked to specific actions decided on within the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding. We would therefore underscore the need for closer coordination between the implementation of the Strategic Frameworks and the interventions of the Peacebuilding Fund. We pay tribute to the donor countries that have contributed to the Peacebuilding Fund. They have made it possible to operationalize that important instrument.

We also welcome the extremely wise use that the Secretary-General has made of his prerogatives, which has allowed such countries as the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Nepal to benefit from the resources of the Fund. The Fund has breathed new life into those countries in order to help them avoid considerable upheavals that could be highly damaging to their stability.

While encouraging the Secretary-General in that opportune role, there is also reason to strengthen the capacity of the Fund to act more quickly in making emergency assistance available. The effectiveness of

such actions could be even greater in the case of imminent threats to peace caused by economic difficulties in countries that are extremely fragile.

In that respect, my country emphasizes the important role of the Peacebuilding Commission Working Group on Lessons Learned. Its analytical conclusions and recommendations must be widely publicized and integrated into the work of the agencies of the United Nations system working in the least developed countries. The Commission must also use the Working Group to hone the concept of the Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy, both to coordinate the efforts of the various partners and to provide for a division of labour on the ground based on the known comparative advantages of public and private stakeholders alike.

The Organizational Committee, the members of which constitute the core of the country-specific configurations of the Commission, must refine its analytical capacity in order to strengthen its role in carrying out the Commission's functions. Particular importance should be devoted to the follow-up to the implementation of the agreed Strategic Frameworks for Peacebuilding. The follow-up mechanisms must work systematically.

My country made a major contribution to the debates on the structure of the Commission. It intends to present its candidacy during the forthcoming elections in order to play a more active role in the activities of the Commission and to share with the international community its national experience in the area of peacebuilding and in the establishment of viable institutions that promote and strengthen democracy.

Ms. Plaisted (United States): Today's discussion of the annual reports of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/63/92) and the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218) brings to a close the second year of activity of the Peacebuilding Commission. In our view, the Peacebuilding Commission is beginning to find its place within the United Nations and contribute to the international community's response to the many challenges faced by post-conflict countries.

The Peacebuilding Commission has achieved tangible results in the countries on its agenda. In Sierra Leone, the collaborative effort led by the Government and the Peacebuilding Commission has resulted in a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding that is encouraging the entrance of new donors. In Burundi, the Peacebuilding Commission process has encouraged national dialogue among all stakeholders on the difficult and sensitive issues that underlie recurring instability and conflict. In Guinea-Bissau, the Commission's presence in-country has led to additional resources being made available for the reinforcement of the United Nations country team and to further attention being paid to regional strategies for combating drug trafficking.

In our view, the task of the Peacebuilding Commission in the coming year will be to sustain those accomplishments and extend them to all of the countries on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda. The Commission must be able to consistently muster additional international resources for all of the countries on its agenda.

The Commission will need to better reach out to international peacebuilding expertise outside of the United Nations and find ways to scale up existing programmes that represent best practices. The Commission will need to find its voice in encouraging the formation of integrated missions and better coordinated planning among United Nations funds and programmes. An important albeit technical task for the Peacebuilding Commission will be the identification of gaps in fulfilling peacebuilding priorities and conducting the analysis needed for accurately monitoring progress towards meeting those gaps.

The coming year will be a pivotal one for the Peacebuilding Commission. The General Assembly will evaluate and possibly modify the terms of reference for the Peacebuilding Fund and the Secretary-General will look anew at strengthening the United Nations response to early recovery situations. The Commission's contribution to those broader developments cannot be taken for granted. More than ever, it is time for the Commission to justify its central place in United Nations peacebuilding by achieving results on its own agenda and reaching out to incorporate the programmes and views of peacebuilding practitioners in the field. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should take steps to support the Commission's work by moving expeditiously to fill their seats on the Commission during the coming term.

We take this opportunity to thank the chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific configurations, who have so generously donated much of their time and energy to facilitating the

Commission's work in the field and in New York. We want to extend special thanks to Ambassador Yukio Takasu for his leadership in New York and to former Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie for her commitment to the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Commission during their first two years. We warmly welcome Jane Holl Lute, the new Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding.

Mr. Grauls (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I take the opportunity provided by today's debate to pay a tribute to the leadership of the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, Mr. Yukio Takasu, the Permanent Representative of Japan, and to the work of his team. We would also like to voice our great appreciation to the Peacebuilding Support Office and in particular to the two Assistant Secretaries-General who have headed it, Carolyn McAskie, who played a pioneering role, and Jane Holl Lute, whom we wish every success and assure of our cooperation.

The representative of France made a statement on behalf of the members of the European Union with which Belgium associates itself. I recall the relevant recommendations of that statement: to encourage the efforts of the Peacebuilding Support Office to strengthen its capacity to act as a substantive support to the Commission; to improve the Commission's working methods to make it more effective and strategic; and to consider ways and means to define the entry points for the engagement of the Commission, the progressive reduction of that commitment and the end of that commitment.

Another recommendation of the European Union concerns the integration of the work of the Commission into the strategies of the Security Council as early in the process as possible. All of those recommendations of the European Union, moreover, for the most part overlap with those that were put forward here this past week by the Chairman of the Commission, the Permanent Representative of Japan.

I would like to make a few additional comments in my national capacity, first on the Peacebuilding Commission and then on the Peacebuilding Fund.

Today's annual meeting marks the second year of our Commission's existence. As might have been expected of that new institution, it still needs to establish a balance among its various objectives. Allow me to spell out a few aspects of that balance.

First, there is the balance between two of its primary objectives. Indeed, the dual mission of the Peacebuilding Commission consists, on the one hand, of bringing together key actors in peacebuilding to discuss strategic issues, and, on the other, of closely following the situation in the countries involved by mobilizing the resources required for their development. Within the framework of the limited resources available to the Commission, it is important to strike a proper balance between the efforts devoted to each of those two aspects.

Secondly, within the country-specific configurations, dialogue with the States involved must be conducted with respect for yet another balance between the central role of national ownership and the functioning of the mechanisms through mutual commitments. In that framework, a frank political dialogue between partners for peace is of pivotal importance.

Thirdly and finally, we must, without losing sight of the long-term objectives, create a blueprint for work based on concrete priorities that closely reflect the realities on the ground. In that way we can hope to create a virtuous circle through achievements that are truly tangible for people.

Belgium has had the great honour of being assigned the particular responsibility of accompanying the Central African Republic on its path to stabilization, together with the members of its country-specific configuration. I would like to tell the Assembly how receptive we have been to the various comments made and positions taken during this debate in order to integrate the observations and conclusions of the Assembly on these two years of Peacebuilding Commission experience into the way in which we will shoulder that responsibility.

We are also here today to address the report of the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218). Belgium is the twelfth contributor to that instrument and in that capacity is particularly interested in its proper functioning. The specific nature of the Peacebuilding Fund and the way in which it complements the Commission require further thought. While the difference between the two may be well understood in New York, that is not always the case for the authorities and the populations of the countries involved, in particular window-1 countries. The more clearly its scope and criteria are defined, the more it

will be possible to make it the essential tool that it can become.

In that context, we believe that it will be useful to examine the lessons learned from the first two years, and we welcome the fact that that exercise is under way. We eagerly await the report of the Office for Internal Oversight Services and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations A/63/PV.25

General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

25th plenary meeting
Monday, 13 October 2008, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 10 and 101 (*continued*)

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its second session (A/63/92)

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218 and A/63/218/Corr.1)

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to express my delegation's appreciation for your initiative in convening this joint debate on the report of the Peacebuilding Commission and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund. We would also like to express our recognition of Ambassador Takasu for his commendable leadership as Chairman of our Commission. Furthermore, El Salvador adds its support to the ideas expressed in his statement. We would also like to thank the Ambassadors of Norway, the Netherlands, Brazil and Belgium for the manner in which they are conducting their work on the various countries under consideration.

The Peacebuilding Commission was established with the purpose of creating a new peacebuilding architecture within the United Nations system aimed at helping countries emerging from conflict and moving from war to a process of development. This vision was shaped by the Heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit. Since then, El Salvador has made this vision its own, and we are thankful for the honour of having served as Vice-Chair of the Commission. By serving in the Commission, we are repaying the international community for the assistance we have received in difficult times.

We have endeavoured to share our own experiences of the peacebuilding process by imparting a comprehensive vision of the process itself. We have also endeavoured to provide information as requested regarding our experience in specific areas in which we passed through progressive successful stages, such as the demobilization and reintegration of armed forces. We have been able to share those experiences with Guinea-Bissau, in particular, by advising that country on its national civilian police.

El Salvador will remain committed to dialogue with the various actors involved on the ground in the countries on the Commission's agenda. Sharing experiences also contributes to the prevention of the resurgence of violence by involving the various actors in this process and joining efforts with regional organizations as well as friendly countries, without neglecting efforts to implement strategies oriented towards attaining genuinely sustainable development.

The Commission and the membership in general have been strengthened by the work carried out by the Working Group on Lessons Learned, over which El Salvador is greatly honoured to preside. The Working Group has considered a broad range of

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questions: elections and risk reduction in post-conflict situations; local governance and decentralization; transitional justice; the situation of internally displaced persons in peacebuilding contexts; enhancing the economic capabilities of States by providing support to national budgets; and issues involving the environment, conflict and peacebuilding. The Working Group has also dealt with cross-cutting issues that we consider fundamental to the peacebuilding process, including gender in peacebuilding, by strengthening the participation of women, and the importance of regional approaches in these processes. For my country, it is fundamental to ensure that the work of this group be strengthened in the future, bearing in mind that opportunities for dialogue and exchanging experiences and best practices enable us to give full consideration to the various factors affecting peacebuilding in post-conflict countries. In fact, that constitutes important value added to the work carried out by the other configurations of the Commission. For El Salvador, strengthening our Commission's relationship with the General Assembly and with the Economic and Social Council is of great importance.

With regard to the Peacebuilding Fund, we are pleased to see that pledges have surpassed the expected goal of $200 million. We agree with other delegations in advocating for greater coordination between the Peacebuilding Fund and Commission and for greater transparency and accountability. We also hope that, in the future, the Peacebuilding Fund will be of benefit to national or regional projects that can effect real change on the ground and strengthen peacebuilding efforts. The fact that there is no armed violence in a specific context or region should not exclude the possibility of transferring resources to the key sectors of peace, security and development.

El Salvador is conscious of the importance of the equitable participation of different regional groups in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, as, unfortunately, conflicts are not the exclusive preserve of any specific society; rather, they are the outcome of a number of factors, both internal and international, which combine to evoke violent responses to the unfulfilled demands of various political and social groups. From that standpoint, the more that the international community works together to embrace the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, the more opportunity there will be for political dialogue and to share experiences among post-conflict countries and between them and United Nations organs and to make considerable contributions to support communities in conflict in their attempts to peacefully overcome their differences by means of dialogue and negotiations based upon a new national understanding.

In view of the above, El Salvador calls upon regional groups to consider from the standpoint of inclusion and equitable participation the best possible options to break out of the current deadlock and to define, in good faith, the composition of the Peacebuilding Commission beginning in January 2009.

Before concluding, allow me to make a brief comment on the Peacebuilding Fund. We believe that what the Fund has succeeded in doing is praiseworthy. However, we also hope that the Fund will benefit both national and regional projects which deserve consideration. Once again, we are fully committed to continue to support the Commission and countries under consideration and to share our experiences with them.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): As we express our gratitude to Ambassador Takasu for his work, we would like at the outset to stress the importance of the documents that have been submitted: the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/63/92) and the report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218).

In the last two years we have witnessed the strengthening of the new institutions that were created at the 2005 Summit of heads of State and Government and in the specific case at hand — the Peacebuilding Commission — we can say that the new body has responded in a competent and flexible way by confronting the challenges of the various cases it handles, as well as extending the scope of its programme to an increased number of countries.

From that viewpoint, we wish to stress the extension of the programme to the Central African Republic and the requests submitted by other countries, which clearly indicate an increase in recognition and trust for the work of the Commission. The development of integration strategies to deal with specific circumstances has made it possible to improve political dialogue, to achieve coordination between national and international bodies and to improve the mustering of resources.

Likewise, we must stress the growth and appropriate use of the Peacebuilding Fund and its

simplified implementation mechanism, as well as its being open to specific projects that can be carried out in advance of the acceptance of countries by the Commission. Those positive circumstances are extremely important, since the international community notes with deep concern two trends that have been strengthened in recent years.

On the one hand, we observe that a large number of countries that are emerging from conflict are lacking basic State institutions and thus require emergency humanitarian assistance. On the other hand and just as worrisome, is the fact that a large number of countries have in the immediate present succeeded in emerging from situations of war and violence however, they very quickly relapse to the same situation, and we know full well the outcome: the resumption of hostilities, the unleashing of violence against civilians, economic and social chaos and destruction of the State.

Peacekeeping is necessary, but it is not sufficient. The efforts made by this Organization and its Member States can best bear fruit only if — through coordination and international cooperation — we help the lawful authorities of those nations to build civil society — institutions, jurisprudence, citizenship — and political, social and economic factors that will make it possible for them to become fully integrated in the community of nations, bearing clearly in mind the particular characteristics and sovereign decisions of each and every country.

That is why the Peacebuilding Commission represents for Uruguay the direct answer to the need for an institutional mechanism within the United Nations system that responds to the special needs of countries emerging from conflict.

Our country is firmly committed to strengthening international peace and security and its peacebuilding efforts can be seen by Uruguay's significant contribution of troops to peacekeeping operations — which is the largest per capita contribution in the world. Since its first participation in peacekeeping until the present, Uruguay has garnered a wealth of experience in the reconstruction and peacebuilding of areas devastated by conflict and has spared no effort to put an end to hostilities, so that communities can achieve peace and national reconciliation.

Uruguayan teams have provided major electoral assistance to States during elections and have also helped to protect the populations in countries where there is violence. But we note with sadness that this valuable experience, as well as that of many other Latin American countries, has not been fully put to use to serve the international community, through the new institution.

In that connection, we cannot fail to once again express our profound concern at the lack of proper representation of Latin American and Caribbean countries on the Peacebuilding Commission, whose composition should reflect the participation of countries in peacekeeping missions and the experience they have acquired in peacebuilding, as well as an equitable geographical representation in order to ensure consideration of recommendations that represent the various viewpoints of the large number of actors involved in peacebuilding in the aftermath of a conflict.

Uruguay, which was the very first country to submit its candidacy among the Latin American group for the elections that will be held in December 2008, reiterates its commitment to United Nations peacekeeping missions and peacebuilding throughout the world and repeats its call to become part of the Commission. We will be involved in the Commission in the spirit of providing our experience and our desire to work and cooperate, which we believe to be in accordance with the multilateral mindset that our country has demonstrated throughout its history within the Organization.

Mr. Majoor (Netherlands): Today's debate is important and I wish to thank you, Sir, for organizing it. It represents an opportunity to share our views on the Peacebuilding Commission as well as the Peacebuilding Fund, two years after both became operational. At the outset, let me say that I align myself with the statement made by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union.

The Peacebuilding Commission has invested considerable time and effort over the past two years in implementing its mandate through the development of the appropriate strategic approaches and implementation mechanisms. The result has been the conclusion of Peacebuilding Cooperation Frameworks for three countries on its agenda — Burundi, Sierra Leone and, recently, Guinea-Bissau — based on an extensive mapping of peacebuilding gaps in those countries. Those efforts, which the Commission has had to undertake while operating in largely uncharted

waters, have involved the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, ranging from the Governments of the countries concerned to the members of the Peacebuilding Commission and the various stakeholders on the ground.

While those are in themselves important achievements from which the Peacebuilding Commission should draw confidence, they are only a stepping stone towards the ultimate goal of the Commission. That goal is and must remain to make a positive difference in the countries on its agenda by ensuring that the identified peacebuilding gaps are effectively addressed. That is, as has been reiterated many times before, the most effective way to prevent a relapse into conflict in countries that have been struggling to strengthen their stability and democracy since their conflict ended. This is therefore where the valued added of the Peacebuilding Commission ultimately lies and is the basis on which the Peacebuilding Commission should be assessed. Taking it as our yardstick, we can fairly say that, while we recognize the considerable achievements made by both the Governments of the countries on its agenda and by the Peacebuilding Commission itself, we are not there yet.

What is needed at this point in time — and this should guide the Peacebuilding Commission's activities in the coming months — is concrete support from existing and new donors alike to address the peacebuilding gaps that have been identified in the countries on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda.

We have done the strategic work so far for Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. We have committed to ensuring that the identified gaps will be addressed. It is now time to translate our commitments into concrete engagements. It is only when new resources and other forms of support have been generated that we can confidently say that the Peacebuilding Commission is living up to the high expectations that surrounded its creation in 2005.

It is only right that we should be regularly reviewing the way the Peacebuilding Commission has been operating, and good suggestions for its improvement have been made. Similarly, it is appropriate that we consider how the functioning of the Peacebuilding Fund can be further streamlined. In that regard, the ongoing evaluation by the Office of Internal Oversight Services will certainly give us helpful insights into how its operation might be improved.

The Peacebuilding Support Office, under the energetic new leadership of Assistant Secretary-General Jane Holl Lute, will be crucial in providing support for the tasks at hand, as it has done in the past. It is the Peacebuilding Commission's membership that must and will be most instrumental in achieving the goals that we have set out to achieve.

I draw confidence from the many statements that we have heard since the beginning of this debate last week. There is unwavering support for the Peacebuilding Commission's original mandate and a consensus that the Peacebuilding Commission is on the right track. We are all anxious to see the Peacebuilding Commission succeed, which in practice means that the countries on its agenda succeed. However, the Commission's success, unfortunately, is not determined by our vocal support or our endorsement of its mandate; it is determined by our readiness to make a contribution in the country concerned. When the time comes to thoroughly evaluate the Peacebuilding Commission in light of its original mandate — and that time will come — we must be confident that every effort was made to make it work. The time to make the Peacebuilding Commission work is now.

We have before us sufficient strategic documents to determine where our support is needed most. Let us not waver; let us offer whatever expertise or funds we can muster to ensure that the countries on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda are set on an irreversible track towards consolidated peace and stability.

Mr. Kim Bonghyun (Republic of Korea): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank the Peacebuilding Commission for its second annual report (A/63/92), as well as Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218). We also appreciate the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to organize this timely opportunity to debate the reports.

As is well reflected in the two reports before us, in the period of just over two years since it was formally established, the Peacebuilding Commission has carried out its mandates effectively and shown great potential to become a key organ in coordinating international peacebuilding activities. In particular, significant progress has been made in the

Commission's country-specific configurations, increasing the on-the-ground results of our peacebuilding efforts. I would like to attribute the Peacebuilding Commission's promising progress over the past two years to the active contribution of all members of the Commission, and in particular to Chairperson Ambassador Yukio Takasu, the Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission and the Chairpersons of the country-specific configurations.

My delegation also highly values the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office and appreciates the efforts of the Secretary-General and Ms. Carolyn McAskie in laying the foundations for the Office. My delegation expects that the new leadership of Ms. Jane Holl Lute will guide the Office in further consolidating the foundations of peacebuilding operations with her noted professional experience in the area of peacekeeping operations.

The Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund were among the major outcomes of the 2005 World Summit and, with the establishment of the Commission and the Fund, synergies among the three pillars of the United Nations have certainly been strengthened. Moreover, international support and assistance to post-conflict countries are better systemized and integrated. The increasing number of subjects on the Commission's agenda indicates that the Commission is on track. My delegation is glad that the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission also shares our estimation of the second-year activities of the Commission. If the first year was a time for foundation and preparation, the second year truly marked the beginning of progress. To consolidate and maintain the momentum of progress into its third year, I believe it is high time to consider the challenges before us.

First, peacebuilding operations should be executed in a way that respects and further strengthens the national ownership and priorities of recipient countries. One of the ultimate goals of peacebuilding is to stabilize the post-conflict situation and establish a basis for long-term sustainable development. To that end, national ownership needs to be respected and incorporated from the first steps of the rebuilding stage after a conflict.

Secondly, to prevent post-conflict countries from relapsing into conflict situations, concrete results for the people on the ground should be visualized quickly. In that regard, I would like to emphasize the "three Qs": quick response, quick relief and quick impact. Among other things, health issues should be focused on when carrying out the three Qs because the results of the three Qs are most visible in those programmes concerned with issues of public health care. Moreover, those in post-conflict situations are in desperate need of public health care. Without public health-care issues being solved, no country will be able to move forward.

Thirdly, the working methods of the Peacebuilding Commission need to be further enhanced to respond more promptly, more effectively and more strategically. To attain that goal, the Commission needs to place itself at the centre of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and ensure coherent and coordinated execution of United Nations peacebuilding activities.

Fourthly, the partnership among all stakeholders should be strengthened with the Peacebuilding Commission at its centre. Within the United Nations system, relations among the Commission, the Security Council and the General Assembly need to be further defined in a more strategic and coordinated manner. Outside the United Nations system, we need to make further efforts to establish strategic relations with the Bretton Woods institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Considering the increasing role of the private sector in the peacebuilding arena, we also need to continuously engage civil society organizations and other players in the private sector.

Fifthly, stable and predictable funding should be secured. It is inspiring that the Peacebuilding Fund has attracted more than $269 million in pledges, exceeding its $250 million funding target, according to the Secretary-General's report. However, the report also states that 80 per cent of the deposited funds came from only eight donors. Although it is a good sign that over 20 developing countries have made contributions to the Fund, in order to secure more stable and predictable funding we need to further broaden and diversify the donor base.

Sixthly, today we are faced with an unprecedented crisis, often referred to as multiple challenges — the food and energy crisis, development challenges and climate change. The current volatile financial situation further complicates the already staggering situation. Those challenges may negate the

accomplishments we have painstakingly achieved, not only in areas of development, but also in peacebuilding spheres. We need to be prepared to mitigate and minimize the effects of those grave challenges on our peacebuilding efforts.

Finally, the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and subsequent long-term sustainable development should be a seamless process. Carefully designed strategies and close cooperative relations with all stakeholders are necessary to minimize any gaps between each stage. We understand that the current strategic framework of each country-specific configuration has been carefully developed to that end.

Mr. Cujba (Republic of Moldova), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Just half a century ago, the Republic of Korea was a country emerging from conflict. With the timely and efficient assistance of the international community and the United Nations, we were able to build peace and attain long-term development. From our own experience, we understand and value the importance of peacebuilding activities. Drawing from that background, Korea has already contributed $3 million to the Peacebuilding Fund and we look forward to joining and actively contributing to the Peacebuilding Commission next year. It will be a valuable opportunity for Korea to use our past experience to help repay the international community and facilitate post-conflict countries to rebuild and develop.

Mr. Palouš (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union, and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

The Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office are pillars of the new peacebuilding architecture created by the Millennium Summit. We are very happy that the Peacebuilding Commission in its second year of existence has demonstrated itself to be a vital part of United Nations reform and has proved its added value. During that period, a number of things were achieved. Two new countries — Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic — were placed on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission; the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework for Sierra Leone and the monitoring and tracking mechanism for Burundi were adopted; and the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework for Guinea-Bissau was recently finalized and formally approved.

The Peacebuilding Commission proved its added value in helping countries on its agenda during difficult periods. The Commission provided important assistance during the preparation of the democratic elections in Sierra Leone and continued its work in close cooperation with the new Government formed by the results of the elections. In Burundi, the Peacebuilding Commission provided assistance with issues negatively affecting the country's efforts to consolidate peace and representing potential crises, including a fragile budgetary situation and a parliamentary deadlock.

The Peacebuilding Commission further improved its role in marshalling resources. We highly appreciate the efforts of the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Chairs of the country-specific configurations to establish and further develop contacts with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other banking institutions. Significant efforts were devoted to outreach activities with the regional organizations and important donors.

An important role of the Peacebuilding Commission is to provide advice to the General Assembly and the Security Council. We welcome the initiative of the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session to invite the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission to brief the Assembly on the work of the Commission. The briefings to the Security Council by the Commission's Chair and the Chairs of the country-specific configurations have become a useful practice. Indeed, the Peacebuilding Commission, thanks to its innovative methods — including the use of modern technology such as video links organizing field missions of Commission delegations and in developing contacts with all stakeholders, including civil society, women and youth organizations — is able to provide updated information on the progress of peacebuilding efforts in the countries on its agenda.

We are of the opinion that one of the most important roles of the Peacebuilding Commission is to mobilize the entire United Nations system for peacebuilding efforts in the countries on its agenda. While a number of things have been accomplished, much more lies ahead. Peacebuilding is a complex effort based on social, economic and political

development. It consists of many interlinked tasks, from security sector reform, the promotion of human rights and the rule of law to sustainable economic and social development, including the development of educational and health systems. The more active involvement of the special United Nations agencies, such as UNESCO, the International Labour Organization and the World Health Organization, to mention only some, is indispensable. The link with system-wide coherence reform is clear. Countries on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda could serve as a very good example of the realization of the goal of delivering as one.

The Czech Republic is a country that annually contributes to the Peacebuilding Fund, and our next contribution will be provided before the end of the year. As a Peacebuilding Fund donor country, we are pleased by the success of the Fund, manifested by its capability to attract pledges exceeding the initial target. Thirty-seven peacebuilding projects have already been approved and are in different stages of realization. The three windows mechanism has proved to be an appropriate tool for coping with different situations in different countries. We would like to see the Fund act as a catalyst to attract other donors to invest in the given countries. Based on the mapping exercise, the projects financed from the Peacebuilding Fund should also be used to cover gaps in peacebuilding activities.

In conclusion, I would like to stress how much the Czech Republic is honoured to be a member of the Peacebuilding Commission during this exciting period when the foundations of the Commission's future activities are laid down. I take this opportunity to reiterate our firm support for peacebuilding activities.

Mr. Monthe (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I have known Ambassador Yukio Takasu for a great many years now, and it is with a great deal of pleasure that, on behalf of my delegation, I extend to him our most heartfelt congratulations for the work he has carried out and for his outstanding presentation of the Peacebuilding Commission's report. The report highlights the important role played by the Commission in helping the countries concerned to recover from post-conflict situations and ensure that they do not plunge back into conflict.

My delegation's appreciation also goes to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his report on the Peacebuilding Fund. We are also grateful to Assistant Secretary-General Holl Lute, who is well-known for her energy, dynamism and pragmatism. We would like to thank the various donor States, whose generosity has enabled the Commission's work to be carried out in Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. That ever-growing generosity has also allowed for the inclusion of other countries on the Commission's agenda.

The delegation of Cameroon would like to associate itself with the statement made by Ambassador Raymond Wolfe of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In its second year of existence, the Peacebuilding Commission has undertaken a certain number of activities, resulting in the determination of the priorities for the programme of work and action of the Organizational Committee. The cooperation between the Commission and the main United Nations bodies, including the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, has ensured, given their theoretical and institutional expertise on various issues, concrete results in the countries on the Commission's agenda.

During the period under consideration, major areas of peacebuilding work were supported by more pragmatic methods of work and procedures, enabling the successful financing of the various training missions in Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. Outstanding progress has generally been achieved in that field, culminating in the adoption by the Commission, the respective Governments and various stakeholders of the conclusions and recommendations on the implementation of Strategic Peacebuilding Frameworks.

My delegation also welcomes the analysis carried out on the progress achieved and, in that respect supports the integrated strategy concepts for peacebuilding spelled out in the report, inter alia concerning the effectiveness of all peacebuilding activities and the mobilization of the resources necessary for those activities.

Cameroon, as a troop-contributing country supporting United Nations peacekeeping efforts, reiterates its readiness to cooperate in promoting the Commission's work. To that end, my delegation reiterates the hope expressed in the report of seeing Member States reach a consensus on the allocation of

seats by regional group during the election of the members of the Organizational Committee.

The Peacebuilding Commission and its Fund are two recent United Nations initiatives. With regard to the Peacebuilding Fund in particular, the Secretary-General's report maintains that, in its second year of existence, the Fund has become a unique strategic instrument, capable of taking the necessary risks and playing the role of catalyst in supporting peacebuilding in States emerging from conflict. My delegation, along with many other previous speakers, supports that farsighted vision.

However, the multitude of players, in particular in the cooperation between the Peacebuilding Fund and various partners and other funds, gives rise to genuine concern, as highlighted in the Secretary-General's report. In that connection, the report concludes that, with regard to the future direction of the Fund and its methods of work,

> "The concept of peacebuilding is not well understood by all actors (...) The Fund's terms of reference should clearly define and publicize the scope of early peacebuilding activities to ensure that the Fund focuses on delivering strategic, value-added results" (*A/63/218, para. 54*).

In that context, and especially with regard to the mistakes of the past in the management of certain other funds, my delegation advocates transparent management of the Fund's resources. We endorse the principle of carrying out ongoing assessments of the criteria and directives currently being used, on the basis of achieving an appropriate balance between experience in the field and the financing of projects.

Finally, we support the guidelines suggested for improving the Fund's intervention mechanisms, in particular through the simplification of project implementation procedures. That will allow us, in the long term, to ensure effective action and to avoid the delays noted during the reporting period in Sierra Leone and Burundi.

For my delegation, the main objectives of the Peacebuilding Commission and its Fund are to prescribe a useful and effective course of treatment to rapidly heal the traumatic post-conflict wounds and contribute at the same time to a full recovery from them. Close coordination must therefore take place between the various actors and partners in the field of development, to enable each of them to play their rightful role, under the supervision of government and national authorities, in the full range of actions undertaken.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): This consideration of the report of the Peacebuilding Commission, together with the Secretary-General's report on the Peacebuilding Fund, provides us with an opportunity to consider the very real progress achieved since the first report, which we reviewed last year.

Indeed, it is an opportunity for us to welcome the considerable progress made in implementing the decision emanating from the 2005 World Summit, held here. The major objective of the Summit was to ensure that, working together, we could create a mechanism that could make a difference. That is precisely what we are witnessing. The Peacebuilding Commission has turned out to be an extraordinary mechanism, a mechanism that is at the disposal of the people, who need it in order to, together with the international community, build peace and create the conditions for sustainable development.

I would like, at the outset, to wholeheartedly thank the Chairperson of the Commission, our colleague from Japan, Ambassador Takasu. In his work in the Commission, Ambassador Takasu has contributed not only his own personal experience, but also the commitment of his country, Japan, which is a close friend of Africa. His country is a friend to a continent that needs support and help in its efforts to restore peace where it is threatened and to reconcile the parties to conflict wherever it arises, but also to create the conditions necessary for true development, because that is the end goal and the objective that we have set for ourselves. I would also like to express to him and to the Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission our full appreciation for their joint efforts, for having in the past year worked with dedication, devotion and perseverance in the cause of the international community, in particular the cause of the neediest countries, including my own, Guinea-Bissau.

I would like to state that we have been very impressed by the work that has been done by the excellent team under the leadership of Ms. Carolyn McAskie, who left this past summer. She had headed up the Peacebuilding Support Office. She was an excellent leader, with the support of an extremely competent team. I would like to pay tribute to her here

and now, while stating, on behalf of my delegation, how pleased I am that the Secretary-General has chosen such a competent, committed and — in the words of my colleague, the representative of Cameroon — pragmatic woman to replace her as Ms. Jane Holl Lute. We are convinced that, working together, we can continue the work we have begun and ensure that this extraordinary mechanism can provide what is expected of it, namely that we can work together to build peace wherever we need such an effort to be made.

The Peacebuilding Commission, as can be seen from the report introduced by its Chairperson (A/63/92), has, as I stated, proved to be an impressive mechanism, first of all because of its innovative character. We have been able to see, through it, that, working together, we can do a great deal — and do a great deal better. Working together means including all the stakeholders, all those who are able to make a contribution, such as civil society in the countries concerned, but especially development partners and, even better, the Bretton Woods institutions, which have proven to be not only important but truly committed partners. They too have been willing to innovate.

It is indeed a matter of innovation to leave the beaten path, to ensure that that mechanism, which was willed into being and established by our heads of State and is the expression of a hope expressed by all of us here in the General Assembly, is truly something new and is able to work in a different way. It should be able to ensure that the hopes that often arise from the decisions taken by everyone here and by the various committees at the United Nations, not only are an expression of the solidarity we owe to the people who need our help, but also ensure that those decisions are followed by action.

Very often, the criticism — which is a fair one, in my delegation's view — levelled against the United Nations system as a whole is that we discuss a great deal and we take many decisions, but those decisions are very often not followed by action. That is where the Peacebuilding Commission is fundamentally different. It eloquently demonstrates that when we innovate, when we are determined and when we combine our efforts, our knowledge and, in particular, the support that can be provided by countries able to offer it, assistance can be given to the countries in question. That assistance should not be only in the form of financial support. More than that, we need to be encouraged to proceed democratically within our countries, to elect our leaders democratically, to promote dialogue and cooperation, to promote the rule of law and to ensure that, through inclusive and participatory democracy, all the sons and daughters of our countries can be called upon to manage their own country. That is the key problem, and very often, that is the source of conflict, particularly in Africa: hegemony and lack of inclusion.

I would therefore like to state that, thanks to this partnership that we have been able to establish between the Peacebuilding Commission, the countries on its agenda — which are represented by their authorities but also by civil society organizations, women, young people and political parties — and the Bretton Woods institutions, we have been able to establish a true partnership that truly works. The outcome of that partnership is real, tangible and irrefutable, as highlighted in the report presented by the Commission's very able Chairperson, the Permanent Representative of Japan.

As regards Guinea-Bissau, which since December 2004 has been on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, we are extremely satisfied. We are satisfied because the Commission has provided a link within our own society to ensure that the key foundation of democracy is respected. That foundation is inclusion, which breathes fresh life into the democratic process and gives new meaning to the idea of inclusive democracy.

We have been able to work with the Commission to ensure that all those concerned about the future of Guinea-Bissau can take part in the management of the country. The country-specific configuration for Guinea-Bissau is headed by Ambassador Viotti, our colleague from Brazil, and its team visited Guinea-Bissau this past April. Along with my own compatriots — and when I say compatriots, I include everybody, as I stated earlier, not only Government representatives but also civil society, women, young people and political parties, in other words, all of the stakeholders — it has been able to bring about agreement, through constructive dialogue, on the strategy that was just adopted at the beginning of this month.

The strategy is the outcome of an effort that included everyone, and it reflects the participation of each and every stakeholder. It is thanks to that new,

participative approach that we have been able to establish the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau, which will be the engine for achieving peacebuilding in our country.

We highly appreciate the support that has been provided to us, not only by all the members of the Peacebuilding Commission and the members of the country-specific configuration for Guinea-Bissau, but also all of our development partners, in particular the Bretton Woods institutions. I hope that, very soon, we will be able to implement the comprehensive Strategic Framework, which will allow Guinea-Bissau to take an important step forward in our peacebuilding efforts. We do know that the Peacebuilding Commission is not a development agency. The Commission will help us to lay the foundations that are needed to consolidate democracy and ensure proper development for our country.

As Ambassador Kim Bonghyun, the representative of the Republic of Korea, reminded us a moment ago, 50 years ago, the Republic of Korea had just emerged from conflict. That is a very clear example that should encourage us and show us clearly that conflicts are not inevitable. We can emerge from conflict if we are resolved to ensure that national reconciliation and peace can take hold in our countries and that, together, all citizens can combine their efforts and energies to work together and leave underdevelopment behind. Underdevelopment is not inevitable, and the Republic of Korea is the clearest proof of that.

With regard to the Peacebuilding Fund, we are indebted to all the countries that have contributed to the Fund. We have, of course, surpassed the established targets, but that is not enough, of course, in the light of everything that is expected from the Fund. We should therefore not be too self-satisfied. While thanking each and every person who has contributed — and they are many — we should encourage them to persevere and contribute more. We should also encourage those who have not yet done so to contribute to the Fund. Believe me, that is a real and very profitable investment. To invest in peacebuilding is an investment in the future of international peace. I think we must continue to say that those who have contributed to the Fund have made the right choice, and on behalf of my country, I thank them.

In conclusion, allow me to say that all those who have contributed so far to the Fund are making a difference in countries such as Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Guinea, Haiti and, more recently, Kenya. Here again, we are indebted to them for their solidarity.

Finally, we must continue to work together so that the Peacebuilding Commission may truly be a great mechanism, as I mentioned earlier, a mechanism that will make a difference and show that a reformed United Nations, when we the Member States so desire, can be innovative, realistic and pragmatic. When we do so, we can make a difference and blaze a new trail. We can make a difference with the speeches we make here and the decisions that we adopt, which must be followed by action.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/32 of 19 November 2002, I now call on the observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Mr. Motter (Inter-Parliamentary Union): I am pleased to address the General Assembly on the second annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/63/92). Allow me at the outset to commend the Commission for its great contribution to the revival of countries emerging from conflict. Its much-needed assistance in stabilizing and strengthening governing institutions and, in so doing, enhancing their capacity to sustain peace is greatly appreciated.

I am pleased to point out that since its inception, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) have enjoyed close cooperation, especially in the context of strengthening the role and capacity of parliaments to contribute to peace processes. The IPU looks forward to pursuing that cooperation with the Commission.

It is obvious why the international community should continue to include parliaments in efforts to bring peace and stability to conflict-prone societies. Indeed, parliaments' role in articulating and mediating between the divergent interests in societies contribute in no small way to helping transform societies from conflict to sustainable peace. A key challenge for the international community is to ensure that parliaments in post-conflict societies, which, like other governing institutions, are weak or have been undermined by the conflict, are given the means to perform their functions effectively. The fact that such parliaments are often composed of the very same actors who have been party

to the conflict makes a particularly strong case for continued efforts by the international community to promote dialogue and a culture of tolerance. It is the hope of the IPU that the Commission will continue to pay particular attention to that major challenge.

The IPU, for its part, is committed to supporting parliaments in post-conflict countries. In June this year, it launched a far-reaching project that aims to strengthen the role of parliaments in English-speaking African countries in promoting inclusive political processes, institutional reform and reconciliation. Parliaments benefiting from that support include those of Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. Zimbabwe will hopefully join the list.

The project brought together members of parliament from those countries at a regional seminar in Sierra Leone to discuss issues that parliaments should factor into their strategies for promoting national peacebuilding and reconciliation processes. They include transitional justice mechanisms, the establishment of appropriate reparation policies, the role of women, the controversial issue of amnesty, the pursuit of justice — including national versus international courts — security sector reform and many more. The experiences shared at the seminar highlighted the potential that parliaments have to bring people closer and that, if managed well, they can serve as an important vehicle for political mediation and action and for the equitable allocation of resources to address the needs of the population. Participants came away with the strong conviction that reconciliation was not an event but rather a healing process that affects the lives of several generations and also that perseverance was essential in the process.

Also in June of this year, the IPU, in cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission, organized a panel discussion in New York on parliaments, peacebuilding and reconciliation, which brought forth relevant experiences from Burundi, Central America and South Africa. The debate touched on a number of aspects and challenges, including the role of former combatants, the financing of political parties and the need for the international community to assist in developing a culture of shared responsibilities among minority and majority political parties. The meeting helped identify lessons learned and good practices and pinpointed practical ways to implement those good practices.

Needless to say, the IPU has been keen and pleased to proffer support to Peacebuilding Commission effort at the national level, especially in Burundi and Sierra Leone. In Burundi, the IPU has been engaged with the parliament to assist it in promoting dialogue and establishing mechanisms that promote inclusiveness in decision-making. It has also continued to provide assistance to women parliamentarians.

In Sierra Leone, at the request of the Peacebuilding Commission, the IPU carried out a comprehensive assessment of the needs of the parliament in October 2007. The challenges facing the parliament are typical ones for a post-conflict environment. The wounds of conflict have yet to be completely healed, and Sierra Leone remains a fragile and volatile society. The parliament faces the daunting task of putting the pieces of Sierra Leonean society back together. National reconciliation and transitional justice will therefore continue to be at the top of the agenda. The IPU, in cooperation with UNDP, intends to build on that assessment to identify specific interventions that will enable the parliament to come to grips with those challenges.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that a parliament is a complex institution whose potential to deliver is not always guaranteed. The challenge for the international community is therefore to take cognizance of parliament's role and complexity and to nurture its full capacity. In that regard, we are pleased that the Commission has continued to place the needs of democratically elected parliaments high on its agenda. For our part, we will continue to raise awareness of the work of the Commission among our members along the lines indicated in the report.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda items 10 and 101?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.